THE FUTURIANS™

MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL

No. 9 $6.95
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By DAVE COCKRUM

STAN LEE presents

A MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL

By DAVE COCKRUM

When tomorrow is a no-win situation, you may have to settle for yesterday.

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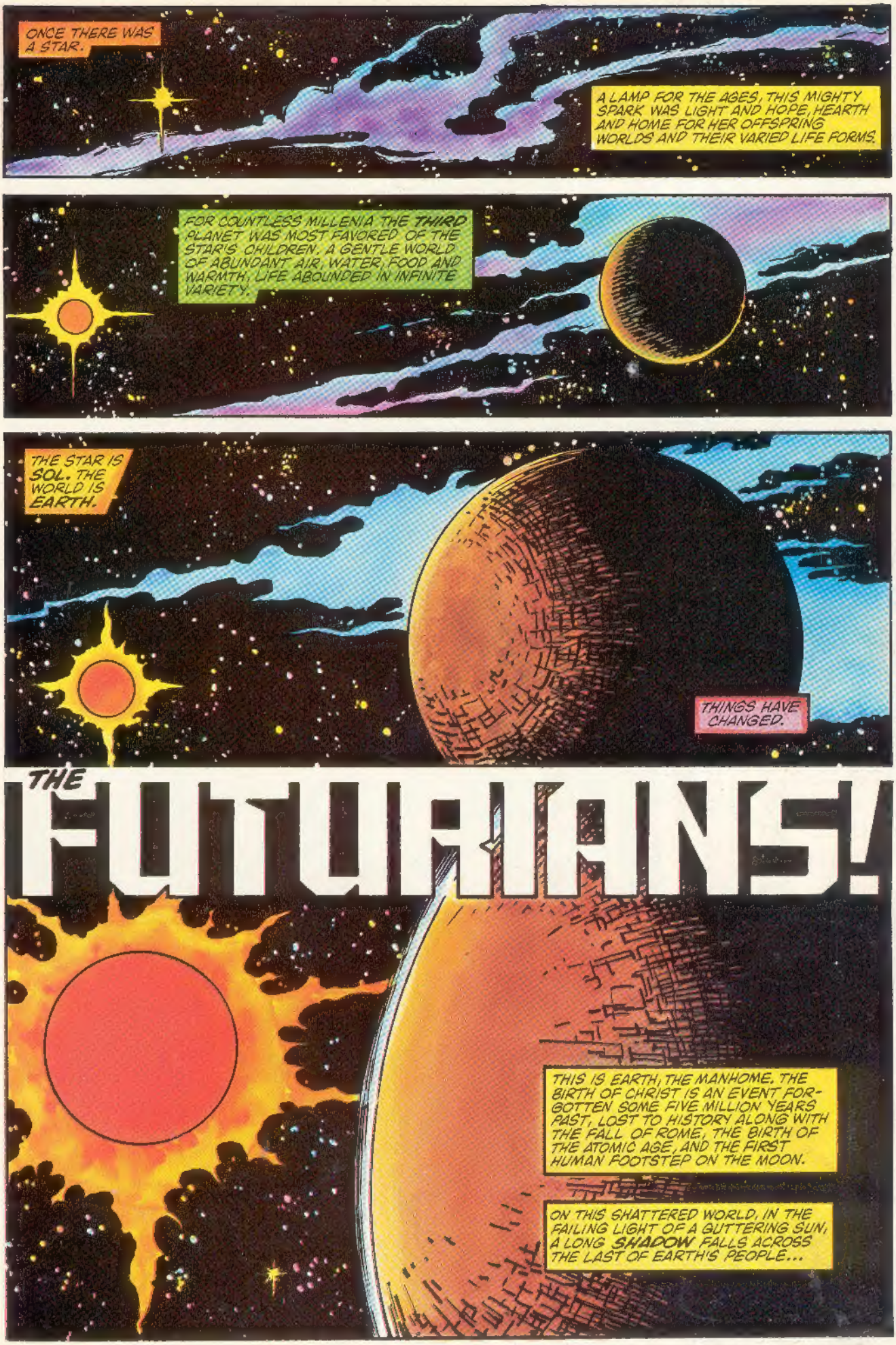
DEDICATION

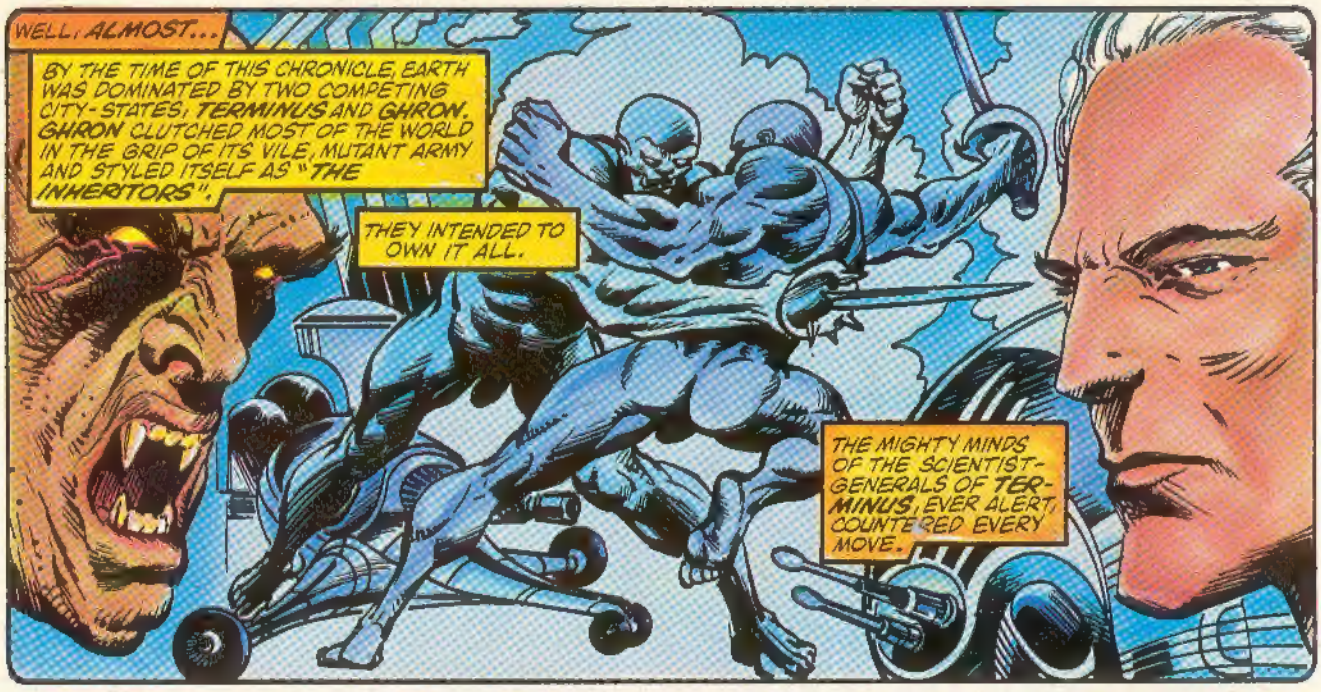
To Stan, Jack, Steve, John, Bill, Julie,
Murray, Gardner, Murphy, Joe, Gil, Carmine,
Curt, Will, C.C., Mac, Jesse, Carl, Dick,
Reed, Chuck, Al, and especially Wally --

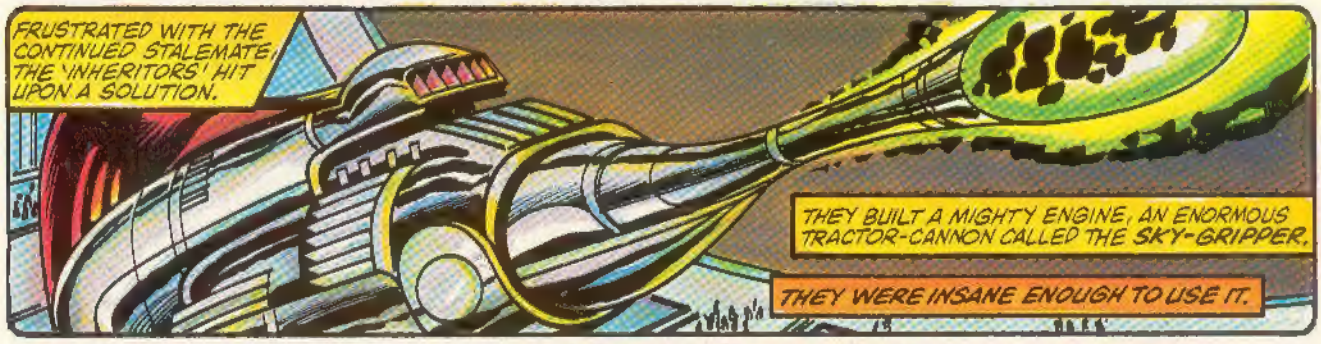
-- who, with a host of others, blazed the
trail and made this work happen --

-- and to Paty, whose magic palette breathed
life into it.

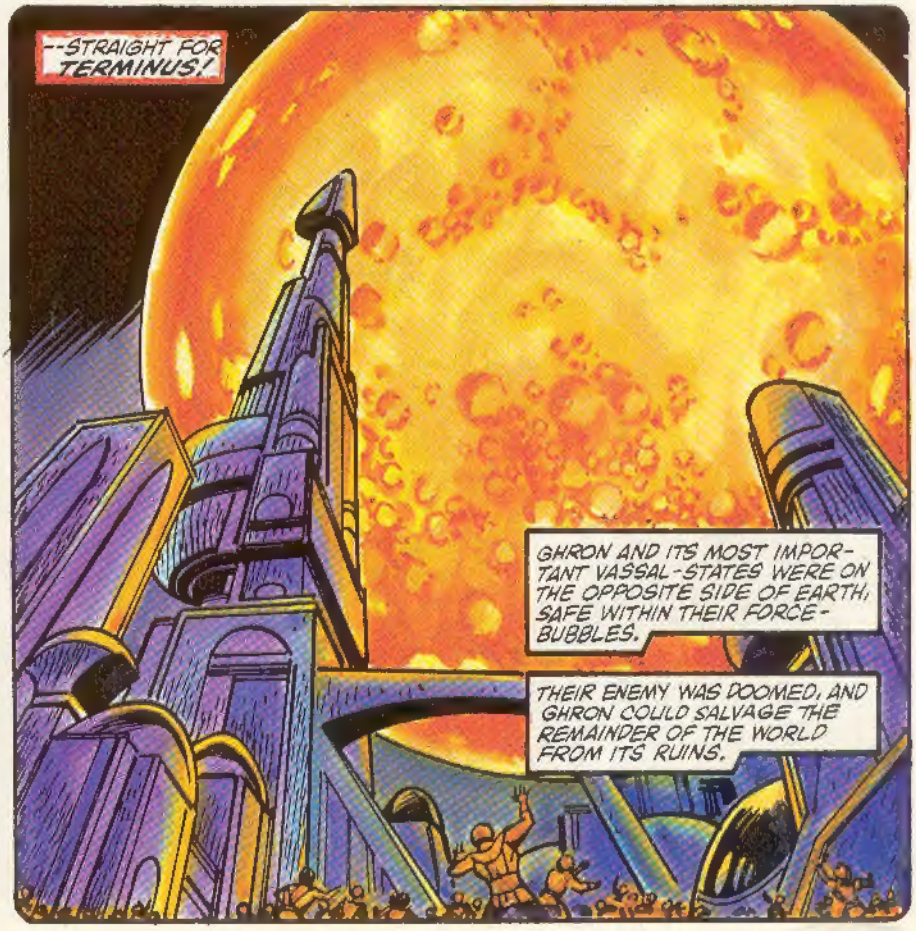

ONCE THERE WAS A STAR.
A LAMP FOR THE AGES, THIS MIGHTY SPARK WAS LIGHT AND HOPE, HEARTH AND HOME FOR HER OFFSPRING WORLDS AND THEIR VARIED LIFE FORMS.
FOR COUNTLESS MILLENIA THE THIRD PLANET WAS MOST FAVORED OF THE STAR'S CHILDREN. A GENTLE WORLD OF ABUNDANT AIR, WATER, FOOD AND WARMTH, LIFE ABOUNDED IN INFINITE VARIETY.
THE STAR IS SOL. THE WORLD IS EARTH.
THINGS HAVE CHANGED.
THE FUTURIANS!
THIS IS EARTH, THE MANHOME. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST IS AN EVENT FORGOTTEN SOME FIVE MILLION YEARS PAST, LOST TO HISTORY ALONG WITH THE FALL OF ROME, THE BIRTH OF THE ATOMIC AGE, AND THE FIRST HUMAN FOOTSTEP ON THE MOON.
ON THIS SHATTERED WORLD, IN THE FAILING LIGHT OF A GUTTERING SUN, A LONG SHADOW FALLS ACROSS THE LAST OF EARTH'S PEOPLE...

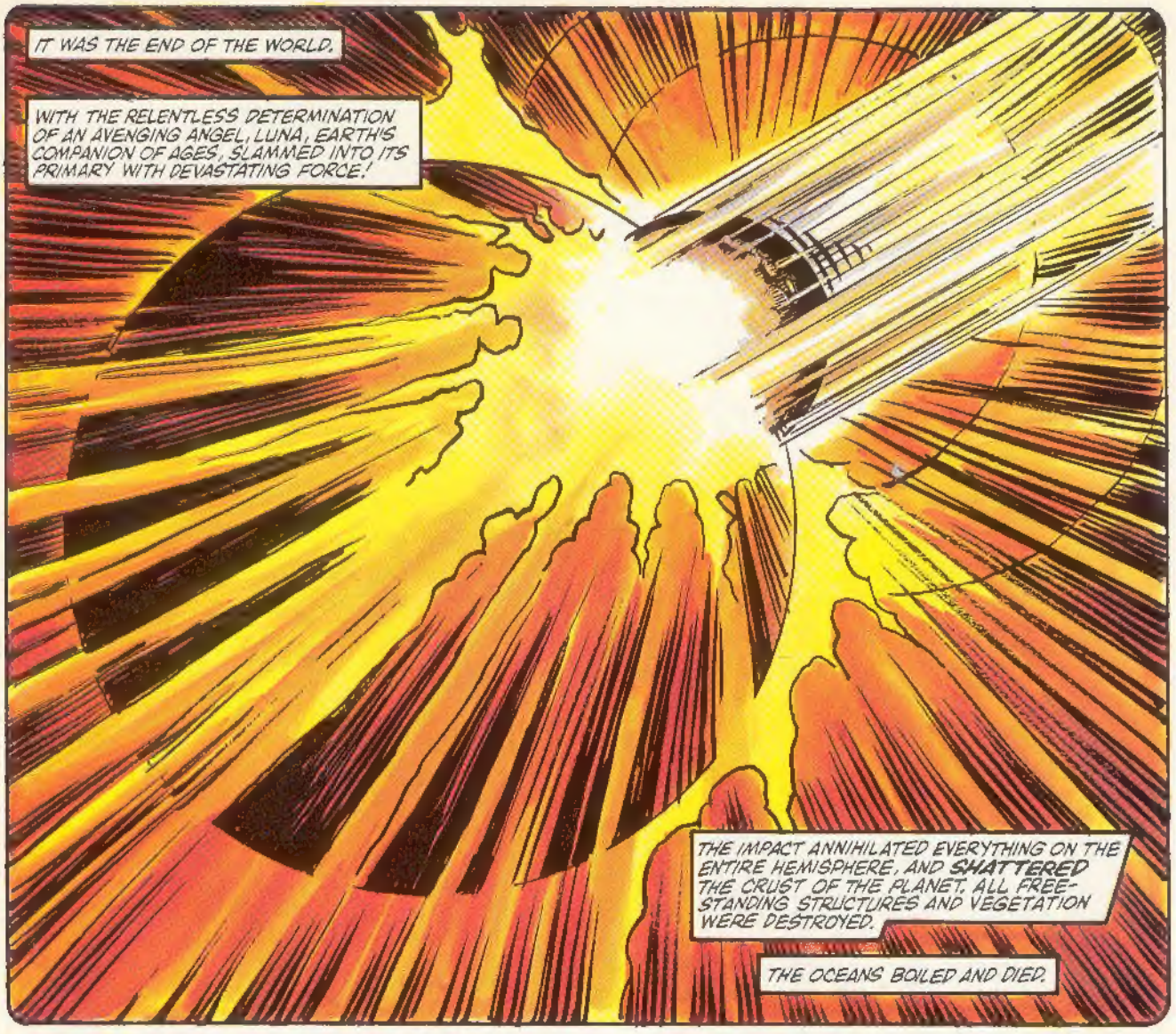
EARTH HAS BEEN KIND TO HUMANITY (KINDER BY FAR THAN HUMANITY HAS BEEN TO EARTH.) CIVILIZATIONS HAVE RISEN BY THE HUNDREDS; EMPIRES HAVE FALLEN AND BEEN FORGOTTEN.
MAN CONQUERED AND COLONIZED THE STARS--NOT ONCE BUT A DOZEN TIMES--AND FINALLY CAME HOME AND FORGOT THE STARS.
AT ITS ZENITH, EARTH'S CIVILIZATION REPRESENTED A VAST MÉLANGE OF HUMAN, ALIEN AND EVEN ROBOTIC CULTURES...
THERE WERE WARS. THERE WERE ALWAYS WARS.
MAN IS TOO GOOD AT WARFARE TO READILY GIVE IT UP...
BUT THERE CAME A TIME WHEN ENTIRE NATIONS COULD WRAP THEMSELVES IN IMPENETRABLE FORCE-BUBBLES--
--AND THEREAFTER THE ONLY CASUALTIES WERE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS, NONCOMBATANTS, AND NATIONS TOO POOR TO OWN PROTECTION.
SUCCESSFUL ARMED AGGRESSION BECAME OBSOLETE.


WELL, ALMOST...
BY THE TIME OF THIS CHRONICLE, EARTH WAS DOMINATED BY TWO COMPETING CITY-STATES, TERMINUS AND GHRON. GHRON CLUTCHED MOST OF THE WORLD IN THE GRIP OF ITS VILE, MUTANT ARMY AND STYLED ITSELF AS "THE INHERITORS".
THEY INTENDED TO OWN IT ALL.
THE MIGHTY MINDS OF THE SCIENTIST-GENERALS OF TERMINUS, EVER ALERT, COUNTERED EVERY MOVE.


FRUSTRATED WITH THE CONTINUED STALEMATE, THE 'INHERITORS' HIT UPON A SOLUTION.
THEY BUILT A MIGHTY ENGINE, AN ENORMOUS TRACTOR-CANNON CALLED THE SKY-GRIPPER.
THEY WERE INSANE ENOUGH TO USE IT.

THEY FIRED THEIR WEAPON AT THE MOON.
THE BEAM TORE THE GREAT SATELLITE FROM ITS ORBIT AND INTO A PRECISE TRAJECTORY--

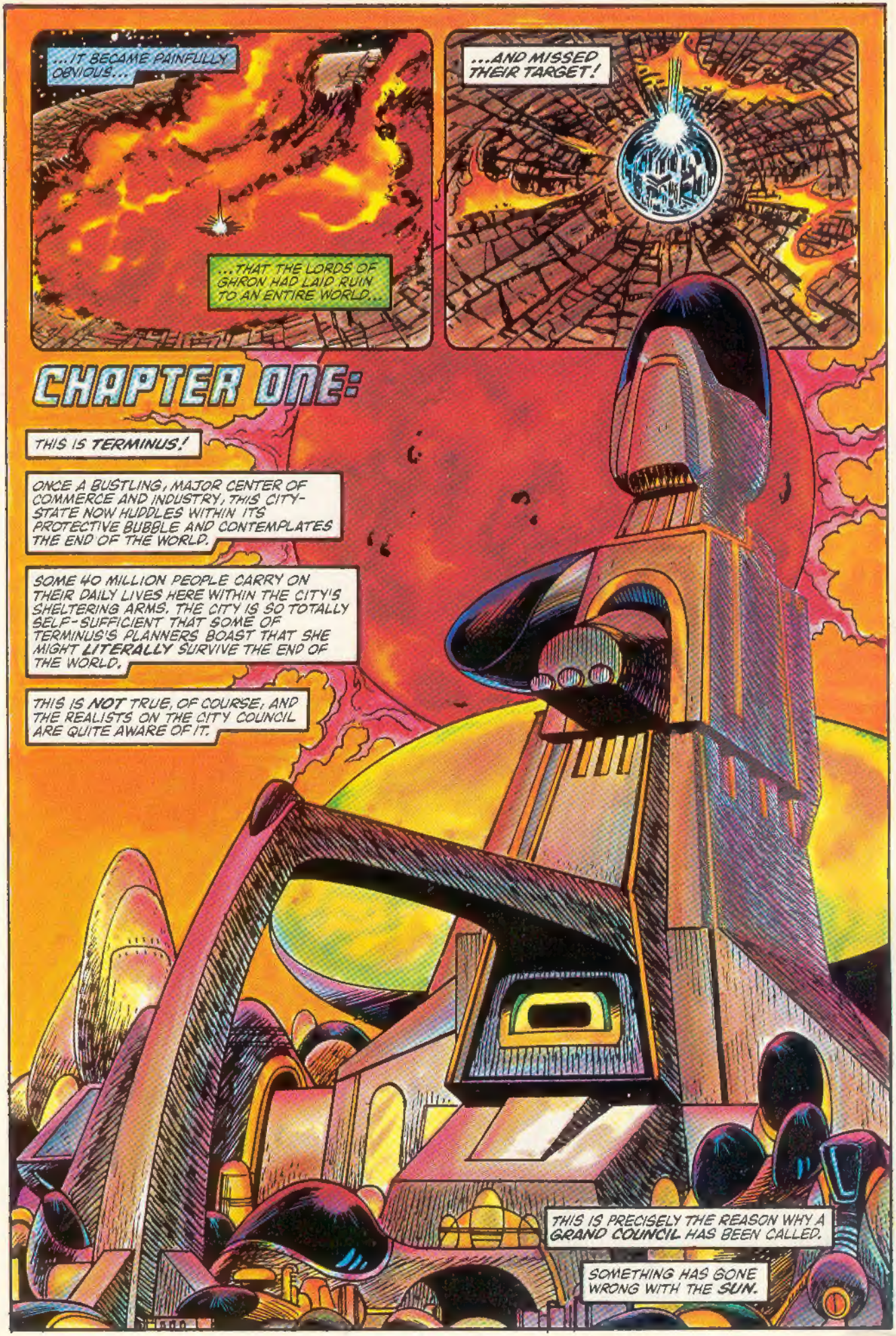

--STRAIGHT FOR TERMINUS!
GHRON AND ITS MOST IMPORTANT VASSAL-STATES WERE ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF EARTH, SAFE WITHIN THEIR FORCE-BUBBLES.
THEIR ENEMY WAS DOOMED, AND GHRON COULD SALVAGE THE REMAINDER OF THE WORLD FROM ITS RUINS.

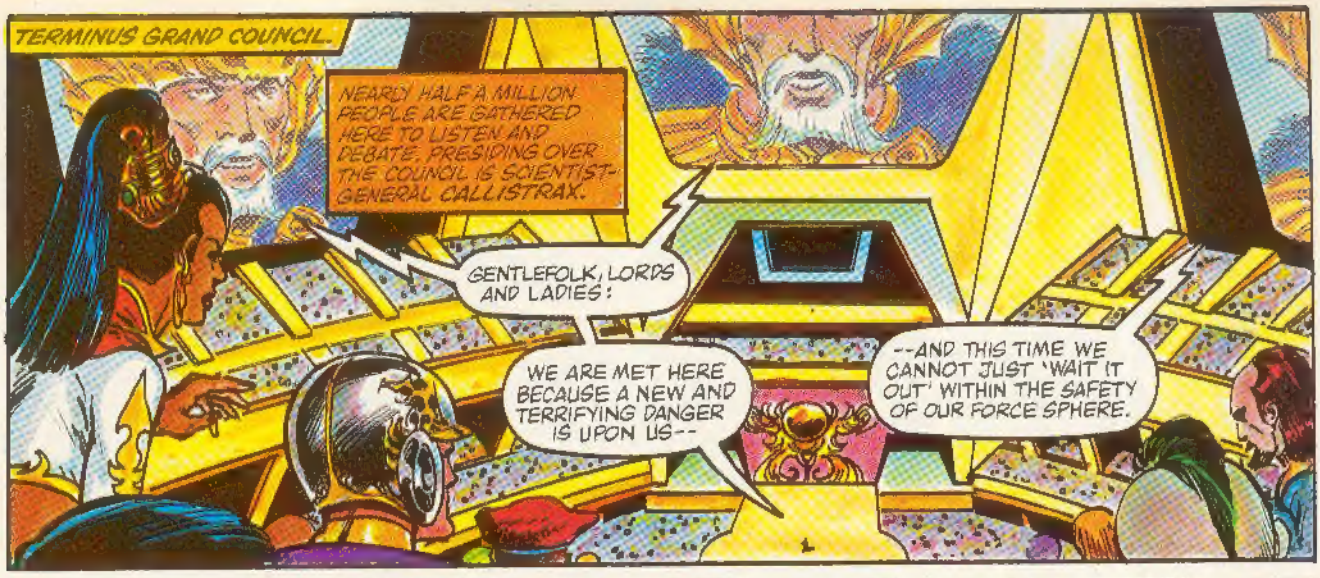

IT WAS THE END OF THE WORLD.
WITH THE RELENTLESS DETERMINATION OF AN AVENGING ANGEL, LUNA, EARTH'S COMPANION OF AGES, SLAMMED INTO ITS PRIMARY WITH DEVASTATING FORCE!
THE IMPACT ANNIHILATED EVERYTHING ON THE ENTIRE HEMISPHERE, AND SHATTERED THE CRUST OF THE PLANET. ALL FREE-STANDING STRUCTURES AND VEGETATION WERE DESTROYED.
THE OCEANS BOILED AND DIED.

NINETY-FIVE PER CENT OF ALL LIVING CREATURES WERE INSTANTLY VAPORIZED.

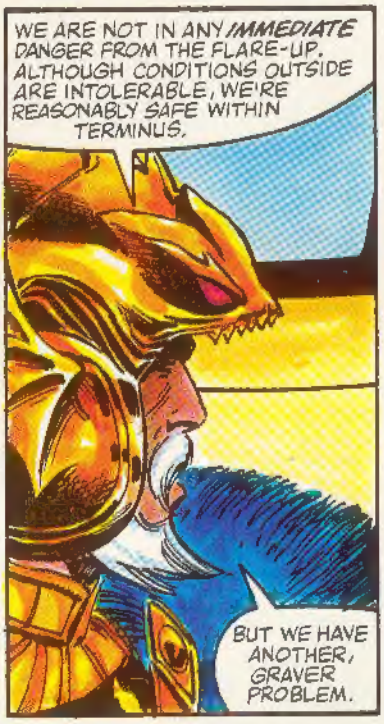
THE IMPACT CRATER, HELLISHLY RADIOACTIVE, WAS UNAPPROACHABLE FOR MONTHS BY THE SURVIVORS OF GHRON.
THE HEMISPHERE WAS BLASTED, SHATTERED, IN MANY PLACES MOLTEN. HALF A WORLD... USELESS.

WHEN THE RADIATION AND FIRE FINALLY DIED DOWN ENOUGH TO APPROACH...
...AND INTERFERENCE CLEARED ENOUGH FOR INSTRUMENTS TO MAKE READINGS...


...IT BECAME PAINFULLY OBVIOUS...
...THAT THE LORDS OF GHRON HAD LAID RUIN TO AN ENTIRE WORLD...
...AND MISSED THEIR TARGET!
CHAPTER ONE:
THIS IS TERMINUS!
ONCE A BUSTLING, MAJOR CENTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THIS CITY-STATE NOW HUDDLES WITHIN ITS PROTECTIVE BUBBLE AND CONTEMPLATES THE END OF THE WORLD.
SOME 40 MILLION PEOPLE CARRY ON THEIR DAILY LIVES HERE WITHIN THE CITY'S SHELTERING ARMS. THE CITY IS SO TOTALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT THAT SOME OF TERMINUS'S PLANNERS BOAST THAT SHE MIGHT LITERALLY SURVIVE THE END OF THE WORLD.
THIS IS NOT TRUE, OF COURSE, AND THE REALISTS ON THE CITY COUNCIL ARE QUITE AWARE OF IT.
THIS IS PRECISELY THE REASON WHY A GRAND COUNCIL HAS BEEN CALLED.
SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG WITH THE SUN.


TERMINUS GRAND COUNCIL.
NEARLY HALF A MILLION PEOPLE ARE GATHERED HERE TO LISTEN AND DEBATE. PRESIDING OVER THE COUNCIL IS SCIENTIST-GENERAL CALLISTRAX.
GENTLEFOLK, LORDS AND LADIES:
WE ARE MET HERE BECAUSE A NEW AND TERRIFYING DANGER IS UPON US--
--AND THIS TIME WE CANNOT JUST 'WAIT IT OUT' WITHIN THE SAFETY OF OUR FORCE SPHERE.

YOU ARE ALL AWARE THAT RECENTLY, WITHOUT WARNING, OUR SUN HAS EXPANDED INTO A RED GIANT.
IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS, THIS SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED FOR ANOTHER HUNDRED MILLION YEARS OR SO.
THIS FLARE-UP WAS ARTIFICIALLY INDUCED.

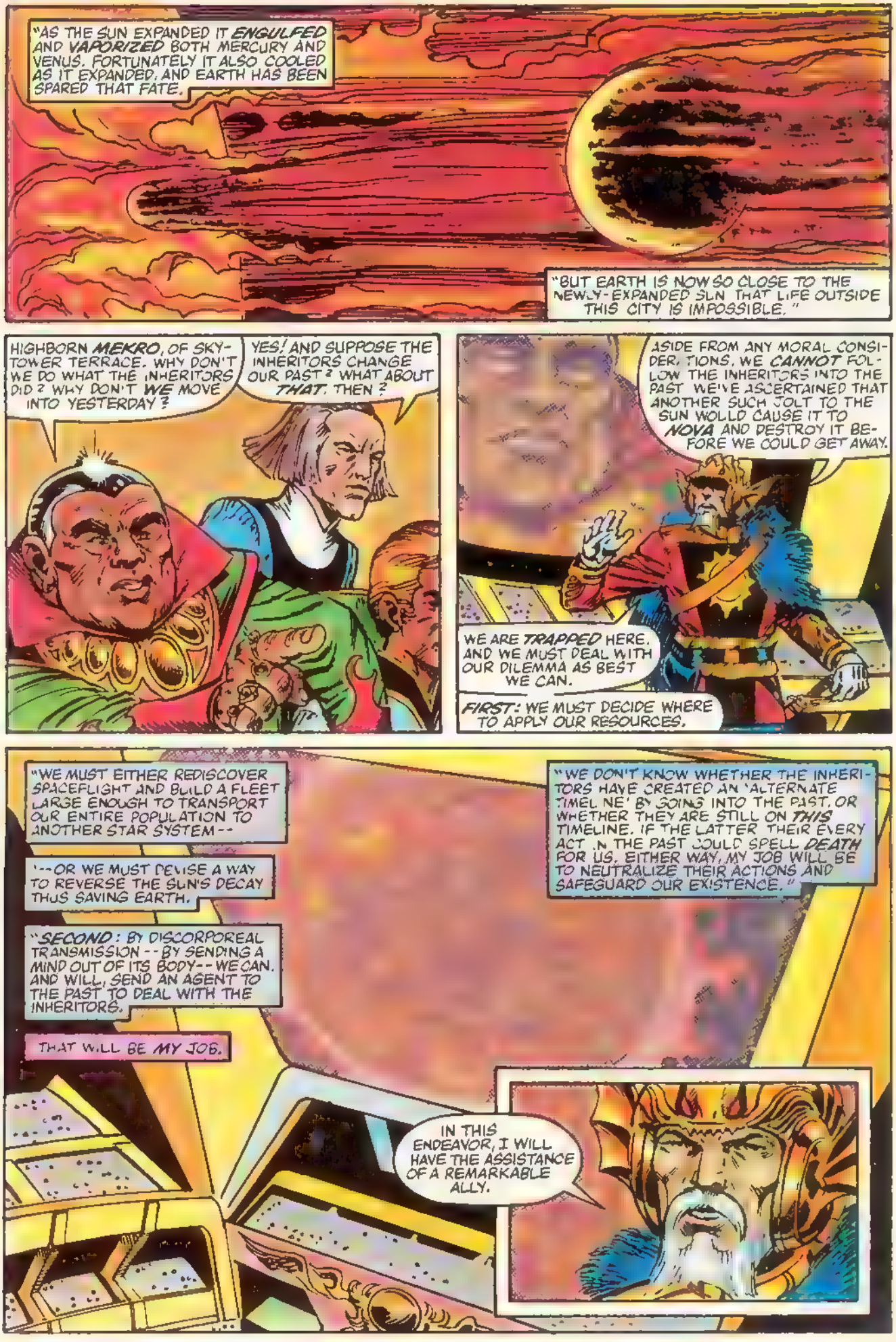

WE ARE NOT IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER FROM THE FLARE-UP. ALTHOUGH CONDITIONS OUTSIDE ARE INTOLERABLE, WE'RE REASONABLY SAFE WITHIN TERMINUS.
BUT WE HAVE ANOTHER, GRAVER PROBLEM.

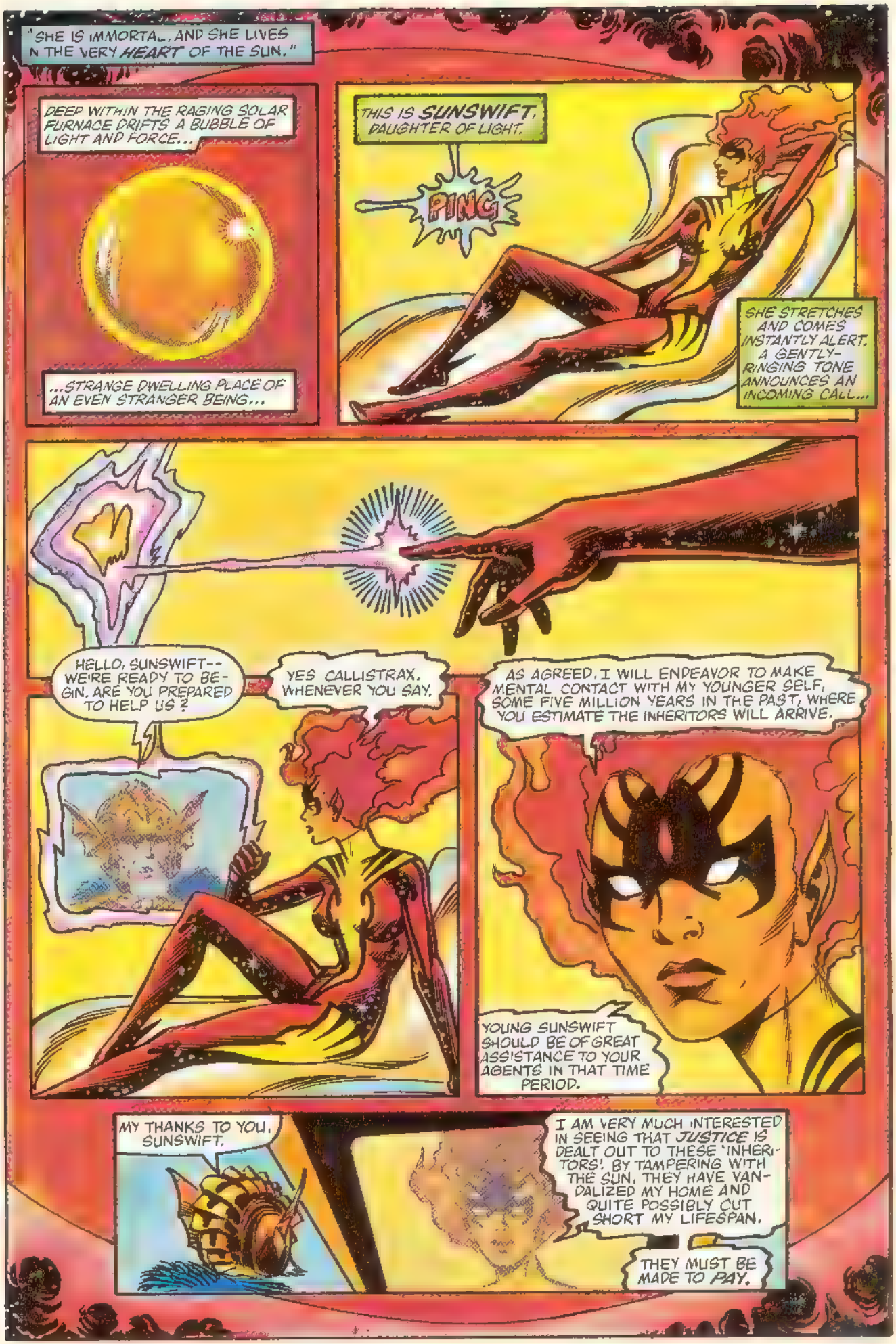
ONCE AGAIN WE ARE THREATENED BY OUR ENEMIES IN GHRON, THOSE SELF-STYLED INHERITORS OF THE WORLD.
THE FLARE-UP WAS THEIR DOING.

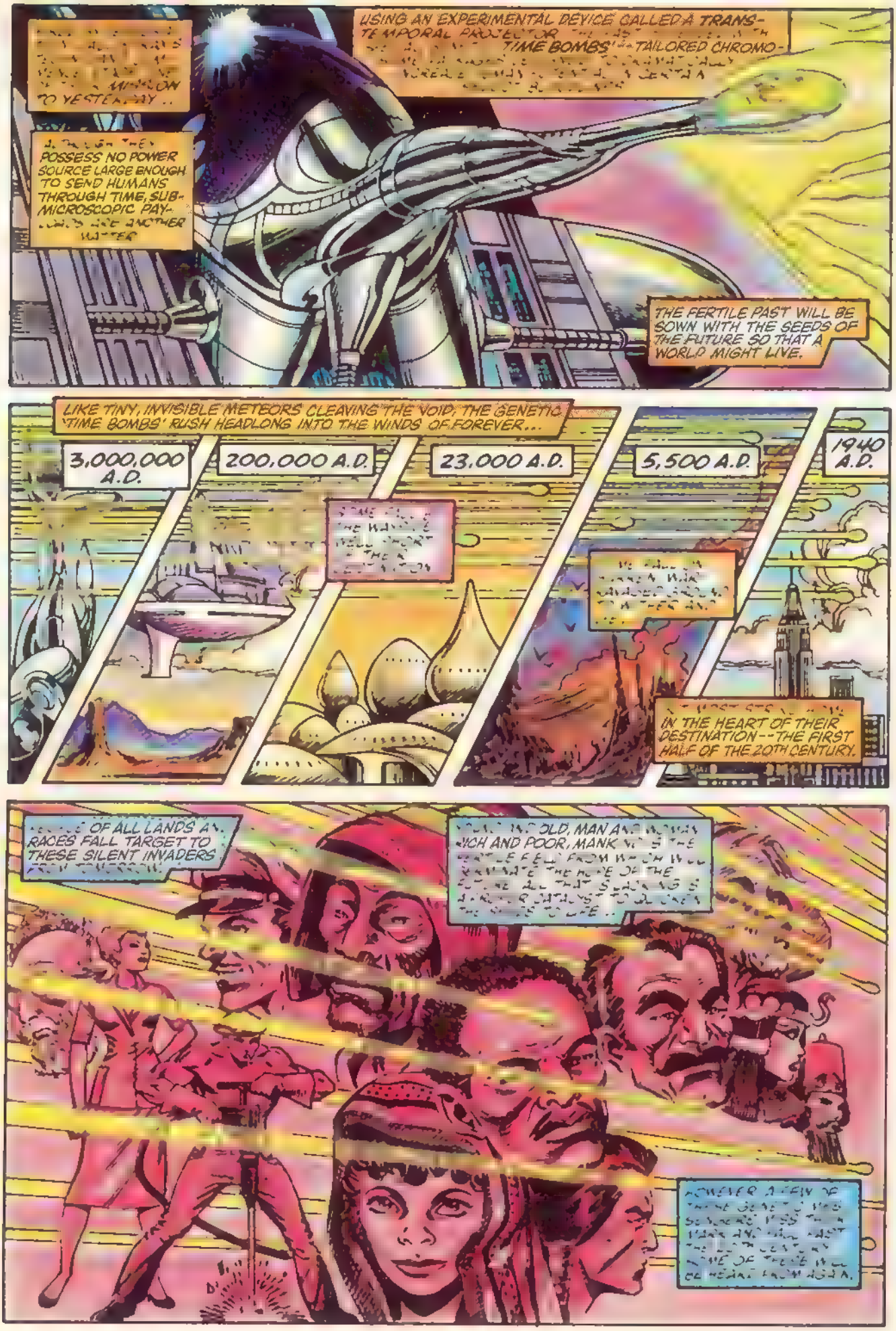
MY LORD CALLISTRAX-- I AM FLANDRY OF EAST LEVEL TWO. FORGIVE ME, BUT THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN ATTEMPT TO BLAME ALL OUR PROBLEMS ON A POPULAR SCAPEGOAT.
GO GET 'EM, FLANNY!

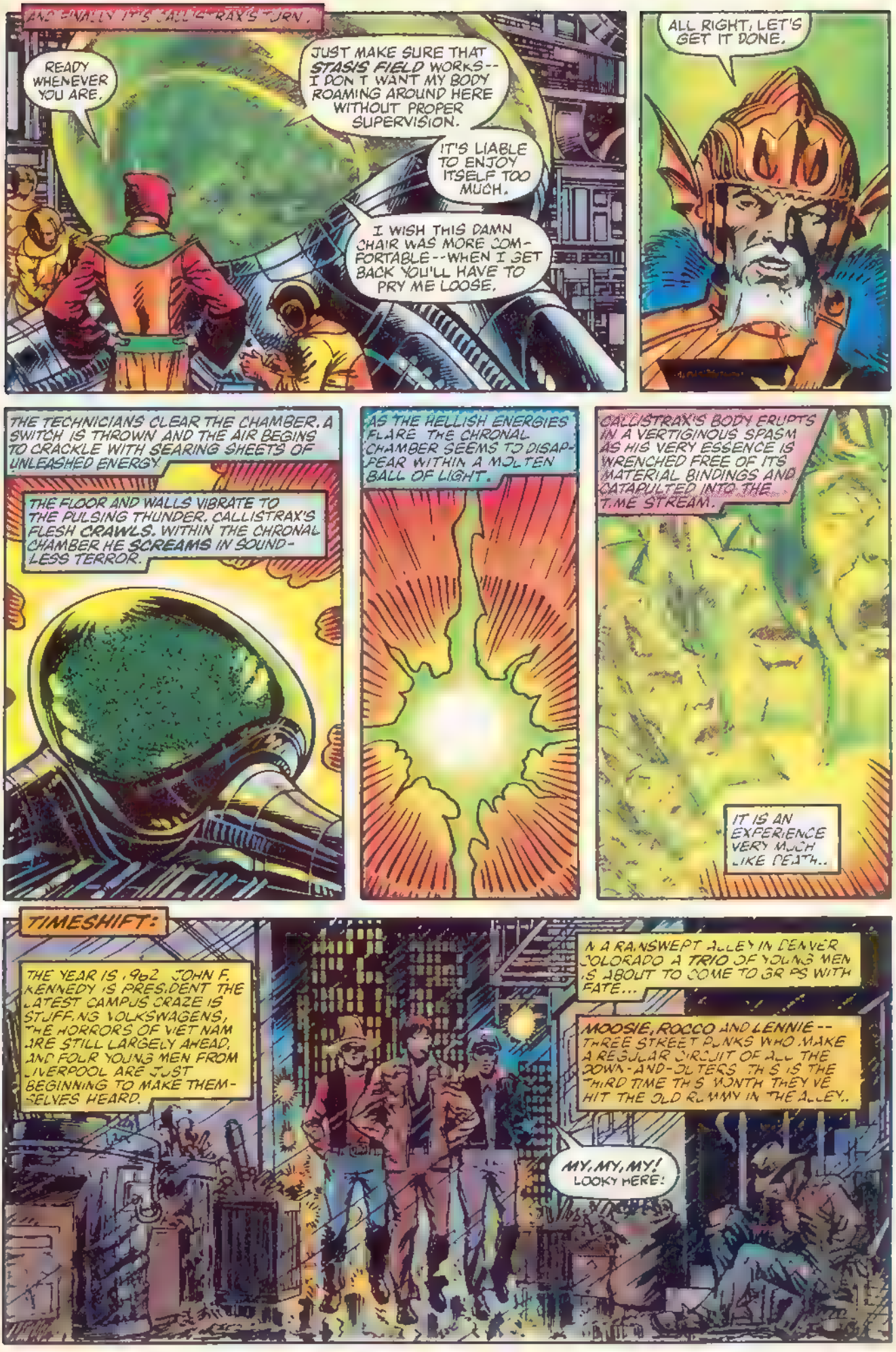
THE FACT IS, NOT EVEN THE INHERITORS ARE MAD ENOUGH TO THINK THEY CAN TAMPER WITH THE SUN AND NOT BE SINGED.
THAT'S QUITE TRUE, SCHOLAR FLANDRY-- BUT ACCORDING TO OUR INVESTIGATION THE INHERITORS ARE NO LONGER ON EARTH.
WE'RE ALONE, GENTLEFOLK, ON A DYING WORLD UNDER A DYING SUN.

TECHNO-PRIME SYLNA OF FOURTH WARD SEVEN, MY LORD, HOW DID THE INHERITORS LEAVE EARTH? NEITHER WE NOR THEY RETAIN THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO FLY THROUGH SPACE.
UNLESS THEY TRAVELED INTO THE PAST! KINDRO HERE, M'LORD, AGRONOMECH FROM HYDROPONICS MAIN. THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT? THEY WENT BACK IN TIME!
GREAT LORDS OF THE AETHER! THAT'S TERRIBLE!
IT'S WORSE THAN THAT--
"--IT COULD BE THE END OF EVERYTHING!"
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEFOLK, I SEE YOU'RE GETTING AHEAD OF ME.
YES. THE INHERITORS HAVE ABANDONED HERE-AND-NOW IN AN ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE THEIR CONQUEST OF EARTH AT SOME EARLIER TIME PERIOD.
THEIR TIME DEVICE REQUIRED ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF ENERGY; THEY TAPPED THE SUN FOR WHAT THEY NEEDED, AND IN DOING SO, CRIPPLED IT.
OUR MONITORS CAUGHT THIS BEAM, BUT AT FIRST WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.
THE BEAM CAUSED SOME SORT OF CRITICAL IMBALANCE IN THE SOLAR PHOENIX; THE LIFE-PROCESS OF THE SUN.
A HUGE BACKLASH ALONG THE BEAM'S FOCUS SUPPLIED THEM WITH ALL THE POWER THEY NEEDED.
"THE SOLAR INSTABILITY CAUSED A WILDLY ACCELERATED EXPENDITURE OF THE SUN'S HYDROGEN FUEL--"
"--AND THE SUN BEGAN TO EXPAND!"

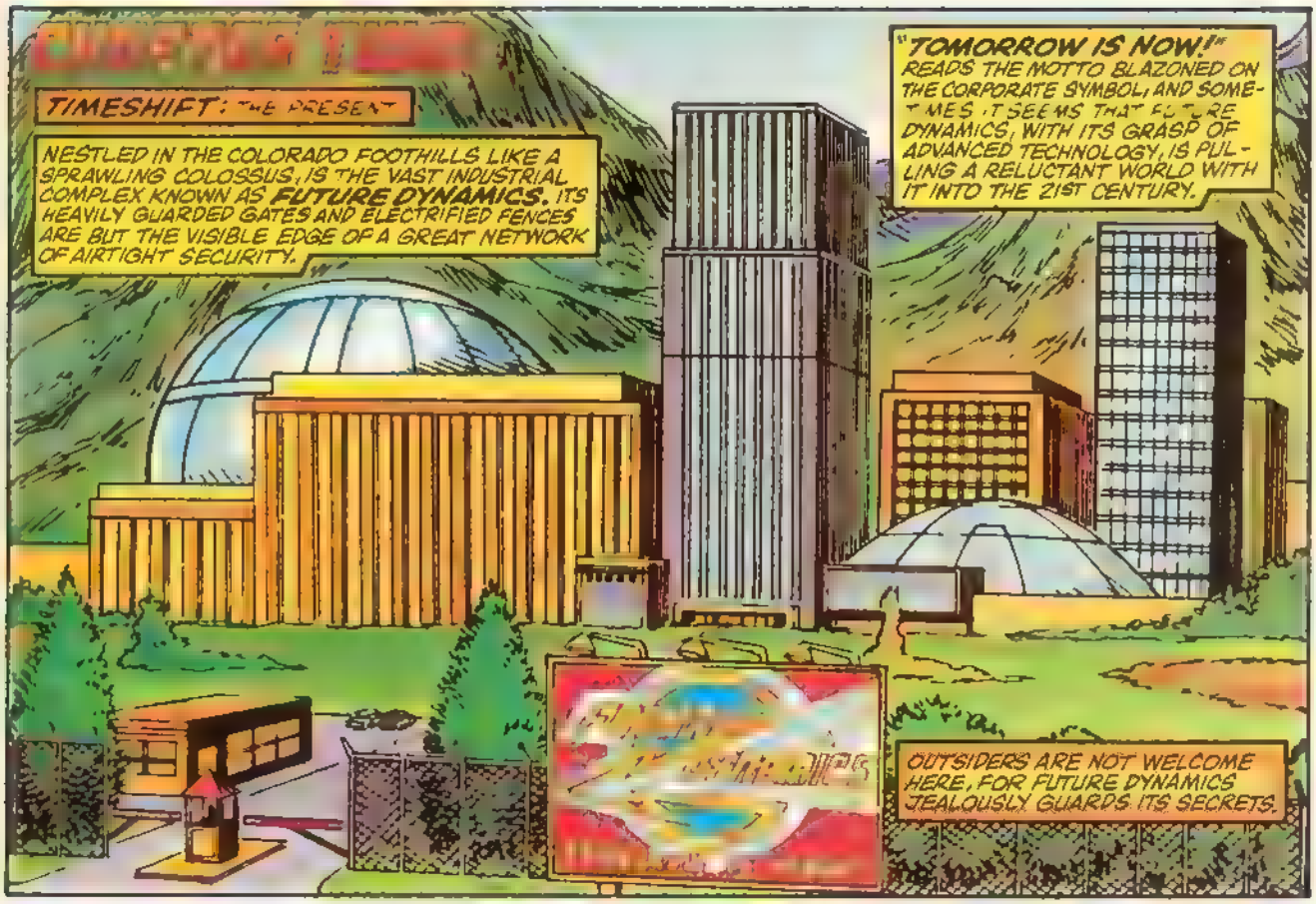

"AS THE SUN EXPANDED IT ENGULFED AND VAPORIZED BOTH MERCURY AND VENUS. FORTUNATELY IT ALSO COOLED AS IT EXPANDED, AND EARTH HAS BEEN SPARED THAT FATE.
"BUT EARTH IS NOW SO CLOSE TO THE NEWLY-EXPANDED SUN THAT LIFE OUTSIDE THIS CITY IS IMPOSSIBLE."
HIGHBORN MEKRO, OF SKY-TOWER TERRACE. WHY DON'T WE DO WHAT THE INHERITORS DID? WHY DON'T WE MOVE INTO YESTERDAY?
YES! AND SUPPOSE THE INHERITORS CHANGE OUR PAST? WHAT ABOUT THAT, THEN?
ASIDE FROM ANY MORAL CONSIDERATIONS, WE CANNOT FOLLOW THE INHERITORS INTO THE PAST. WE'VE ASCERTAINED THAT ANOTHER SUCH JOLT TO THE SUN WOULD CAUSE IT TO NOVA AND DESTROY IT BEFORE WE COULD GET AWAY.
WE ARE TRAPPED HERE. AND WE MUST DEAL WITH OUR DILEMMA AS BEST WE CAN.
FIRST: WE MUST DECIDE WHERE TO APPLY OUR RESOURCES.
"WE MUST EITHER REDISCOVER SPACEFLIGHT AND BUILD A FLEET LARGE ENOUGH TO TRANSPORT OUR ENTIRE POPULATION TO ANOTHER STAR SYSTEM--
--OR WE MUST DEVISE A WAY TO REVERSE THE SUN'S DECAY THUS SAVING EARTH.
"SECOND: BY DISCORPOREAL TRANSMISSION--BY SENDING A MIND OUT OF ITS BODY--WE CAN. AND WILL, SEND AN AGENT TO THE PAST TO DEAL WITH THE INHERITORS.
THAT WILL BE MY JOB.
"WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER THE INHERITORS HAVE CREATED AN 'ALTERNATE TIMELINE' BY GOING INTO THE PAST, OR WHETHER THEY ARE STILL ON THIS TIMELINE. IF THE LATTER THEIR EVERY ACT IN THE PAST COULD SPELL DEATH FOR US. EITHER WAY, MY JOB WILL BE TO NEUTRALIZE THEIR ACTIONS AND SAFEGUARD OUR EXISTENCE."
IN THIS ENDEAVOR, I WILL HAVE THE ASSISTANCE OF A REMARKABLE ALLY.

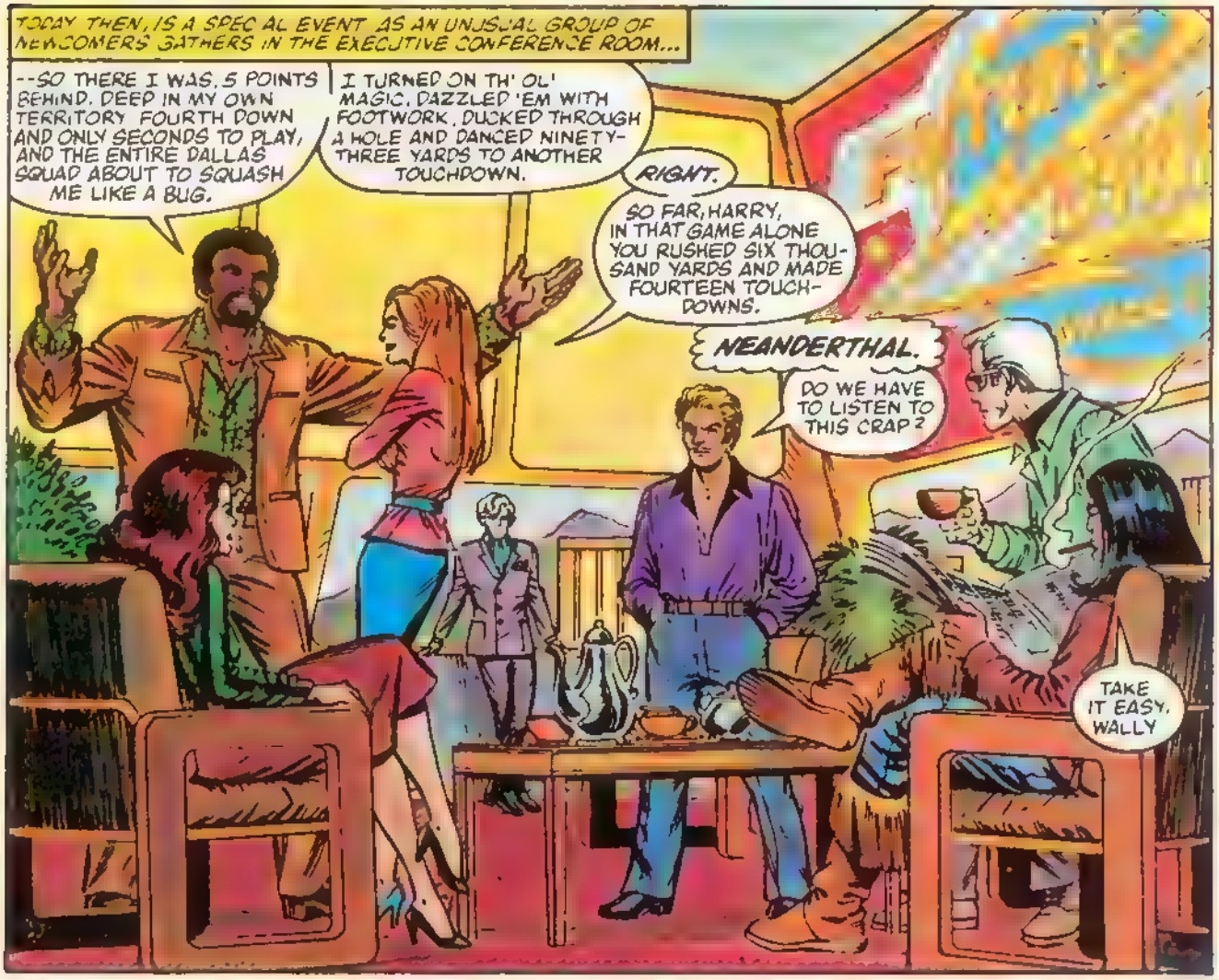

"SHE IS IMMORTAL, AND SHE LIVES IN THE VERY HEART OF THE SUN."
DEEP WITHIN THE RAGING SOLAR FURNACE DRIFTS A BUBBLE OF LIGHT AND FORCE...
...STRANGE DWELLING PLACE OF AN EVEN STRANGER BEING...
THIS IS SUNSWIFT, DAUGHTER OF LIGHT.
PING
SHE STRETCHES AND COMES INSTANTLY ALERT. A GENTLY-RINGING TONE ANNOUNCES AN INCOMING CALL...
HELLO, SUNSWIFT--WE'RE READY TO BEGIN. ARE YOU PREPARED TO HELP US?
YES CALLISTRAX. WHENEVER YOU SAY.
AS AGREED, I WILL ENDEAVOR TO MAKE MENTAL CONTACT WITH MY YOUNGER SELF, SOME FIVE MILLION YEARS IN THE PAST, WHERE YOU ESTIMATE THE INHERITORS WILL ARRIVE.
YOUNG SUNSWIFT SHOULD BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO YOUR AGENTS IN THAT TIME PERIOD.
MY THANKS TO YOU, SUNSWIFT.
I AM VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN SEEING THAT JUSTICE IS DEALT OUT TO THESE 'INHERITORS'. BY TAMPERING WITH THE SUN, THEY HAVE VANDALIZED MY HOME AND QUITE POSSIBLY CUT SHORT MY LIFESPAN.
THEY MUST BE MADE TO PAY.


USING AN EXPERIMENTAL DEVICE CALLED A TRANS-
TEMPORAL PROJECTOR
TIME BOMBS
TAILORED CHROMO-
POSSESS NO POWER SOURCE LARGE ENOUGH TO SEND HUMANS THROUGH TIME, SUB-MICROSCOPIC PAY-
THE FERTILE PAST WILL BE SOWN WITH THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE SO THAT A WORLD MIGHT LIVE.
LIKE TINY, INVISIBLE METEORS CLEAVING THE VOID, THE GENETIC 'TIME BOMBS' RUSH HEADLONG INTO THE WINDS OF FOREVER...
3,000,000 A.D.
200,000 A.D.
23,000 A.D.
5,500 A.D.
1940 A.D.
IN THE HEART OF THEIR DESTINATION--THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY.
OF ALL LANDS AN
RACES FALL TARGET TO
THESE SILENT INVADERS


AND FINALLY IT'S CALLISTRAX'S TURN.
READY WHENEVER YOU ARE.
JUST MAKE SURE THAT STASIS FIELD WORKS--I DON'T WANT MY BODY ROAMING AROUND HERE WITHOUT PROPER SUPERVISION.
IT'S LIABLE TO ENJOY ITSELF TOO MUCH.
I WISH THIS DAMN CHAIR WAS MORE COMFORTABLE--WHEN I GET BACK YOU'LL HAVE TO PRY ME LOOSE.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET IT DONE.
THE TECHNICIANS CLEAR THE CHAMBER. A SWITCH IS THROWN AND THE AIR BEGINS TO CRACKLE WITH SEARING SHEETS OF UNLEASHED ENERGY.
THE FLOOR AND WALLS VIBRATE TO THE PULSING THUNDER. CALLISTRAX'S FLESH CRAWLS. WITHIN THE CHRONAL CHAMBER HE SCREAMS IN SOUNDLESS TERROR.
AS THE HELLISH ENERGIES FLARE THE CHRONAL CHAMBER SEEMS TO DISAPPEAR WITHIN A MOLTEN BALL OF LIGHT.
CALLISTRAX'S BODY ERUPTS IN A VERTIGINOUS SPASM AS HIS VERY ESSENCE IS WRENCHED FREE OF ITS MATERIAL BINDINGS AND CATAPULTED INTO THE TIME STREAM.
IT IS AN EXPERIENCE VERY MUCH LIKE DEATH..
TIMESHIFT:
THE YEAR IS 1962. JOHN F. KENNEDY IS PRESIDENT. THE LATEST CAMPUS CRAZE IS STUFFING VOLKSWAGENS, THE HORRORS OF VIET NAM ARE STILL LARGELY AHEAD, AND FOUR YOUNG MEN FROM LIVERPOOL ARE JUST BEGINNING TO MAKE THEMSELVES HEARD.
IN A RAINSWEPT ALLEY IN DENVER COLORADO A TRIO OF YOUNG MEN IS ABOUT TO COME TO GRIPS WITH FATE...
MOOSIE, ROCCO AND LENNIE--THREE STREET PUNKS WHO MAKE A REGULAR CIRCUIT OF ALL THE DOWN-AND-OUTERS. THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THIS MONTH THEY'VE HIT THE OLD RUMMY IN THE ALLEY..
MY, MY, MY! LOOKY HERE!

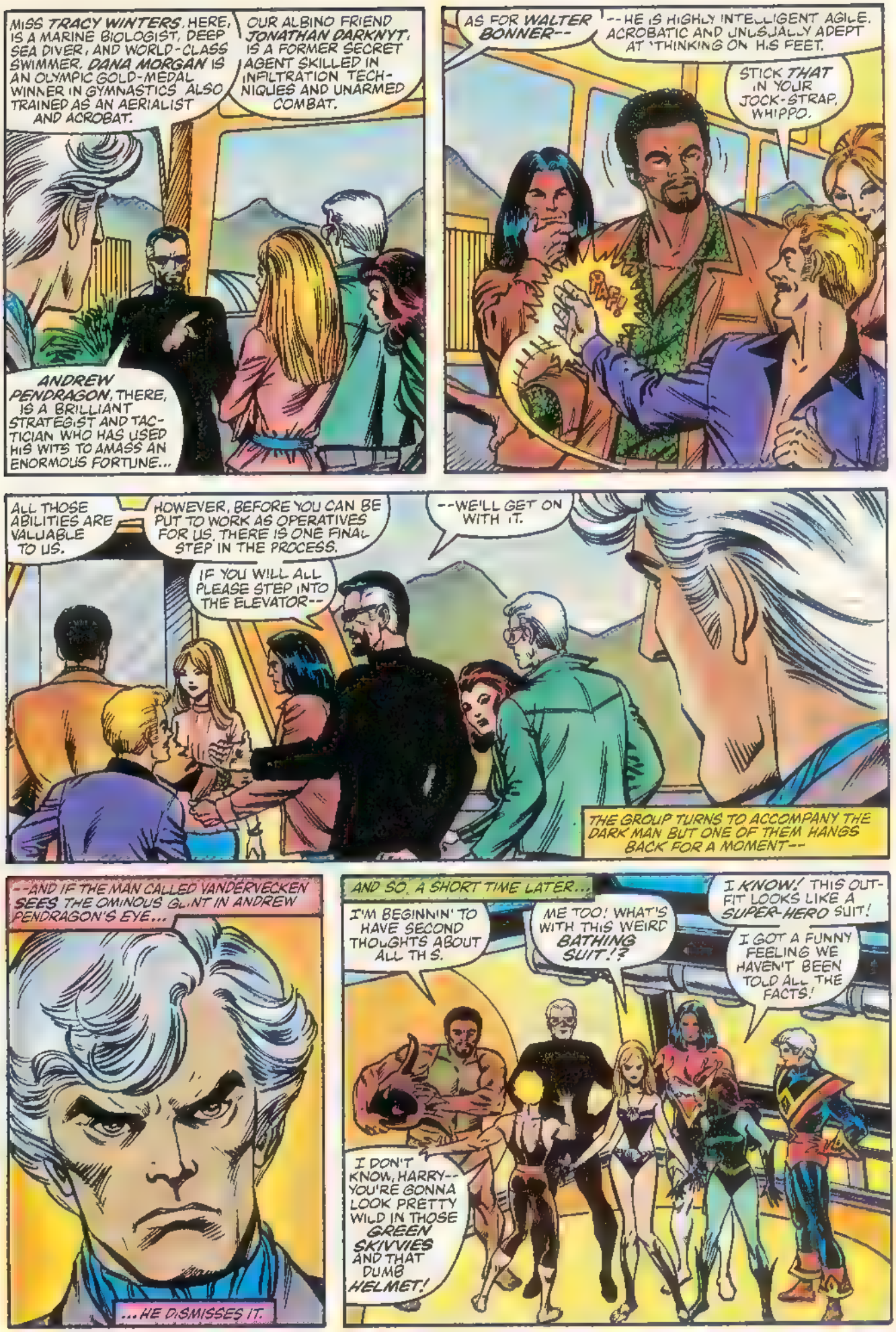
LOOK'A THIS, MAN, IT'S OUR OL' PAL THE DUTCHMAN!
AT'S RIGHT, MOOSIE--
--HEY RUMMY! GOT ANY BREAD?
KOFF KOFF!
NO GO... AWAY
WHAT?! GO AWAY?!
LISTEN HERE OLD MAN! THE TAX-MAN'S COME! YOU DON'T SAY 'GO AWAY' TO NO TAX-MAN.'
N-NO! PLEASE--
SUDDENLY THERE'S A BLINDING FLASH AS THE OLD REPROBATE'S HEAD IS WREATHED IN ELDRITCH FIRE!
HOLY--!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
WHAT?! WHERE-- YOU THERE MAN, UNHAND ME!
YEEOW! THE OLD DUDE'S ON FIRE!
MOOSIE! LENNIE! BEAT IT YOU GUYS--
YAAAAH!
KZAAT!
IT'S SEEMS I'VE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME TO PREVENT MY OWN MURDER--
C'MON, LENNIE, BEAT FEET!
YOU DON'T HAFTA TELL ME TWICE!
HE CONSIDERS ELMAN AND THEM AS WELL THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY WORTHLESS SCUM! RABID DOGS PREYING ON THE WEAK AND HELPLESS.
NO. HE LETS THEM SO HE HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO

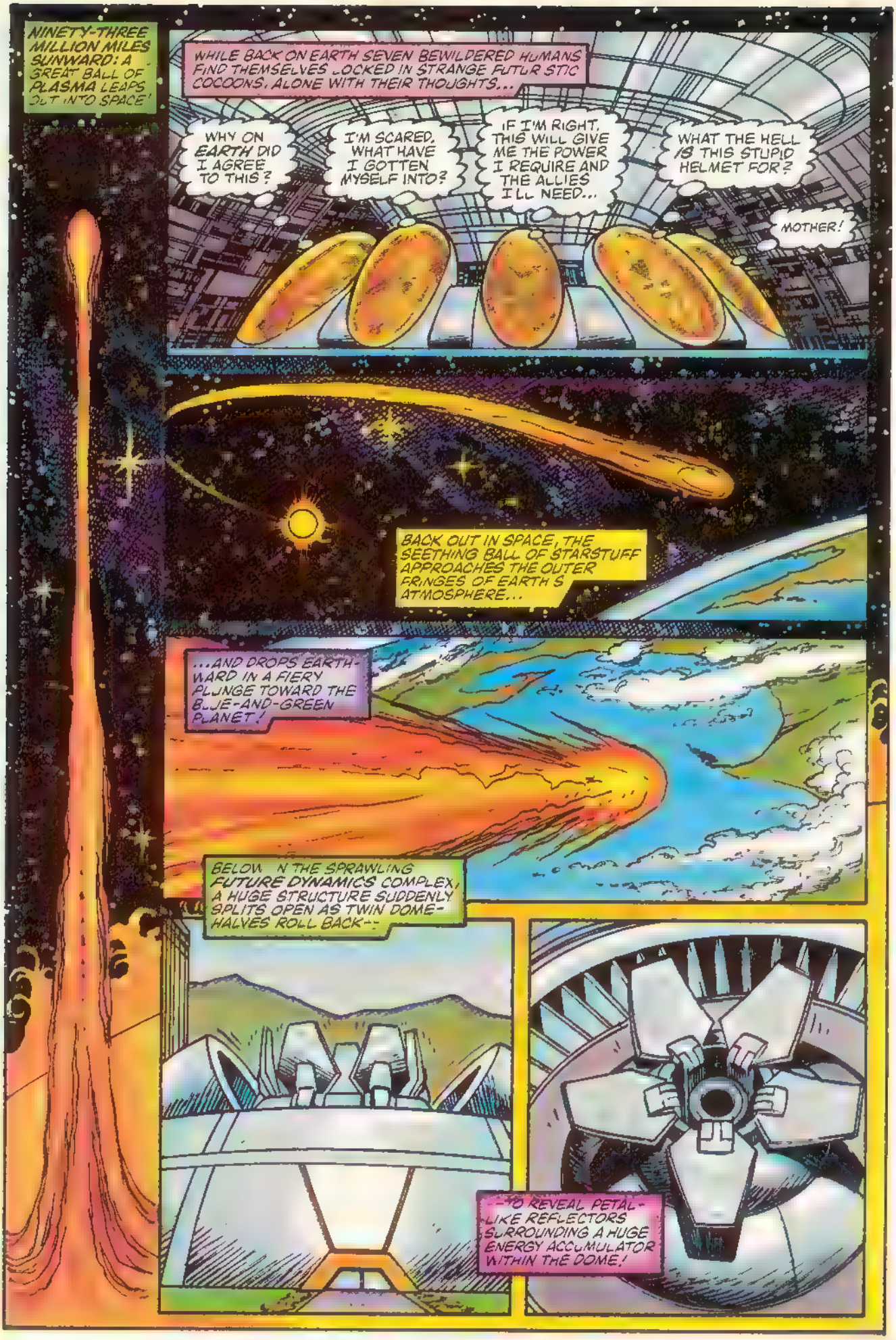

TIMESHIFT: THE PRESENT
NESTLED IN THE COLORADO FOOTHILLS LIKE A SPRAWLING COLOSSUS, IS THE VAST INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX KNOWN AS FUTURE DYNAMICS. ITS HEAVILY GUARDED GATES AND ELECTRIFIED FENCES ARE BUT THE VISIBLE EDGE OF A GREAT NETWORK OF AIRTIGHT SECURITY.
"TOMORROW IS NOW!" READS THE MOTTO BLAZONED ON THE CORPORATE SYMBOL, AND SOMETIMES IT SEEMS THAT FUTURE DYNAMICS, WITH ITS GRASP OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, IS PULLING A RELUCTANT WORLD WITH IT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.
OUTSIDERS ARE NOT WELCOME HERE, FOR FUTURE DYNAMICS JEALOUSLY GUARDS ITS SECRETS.

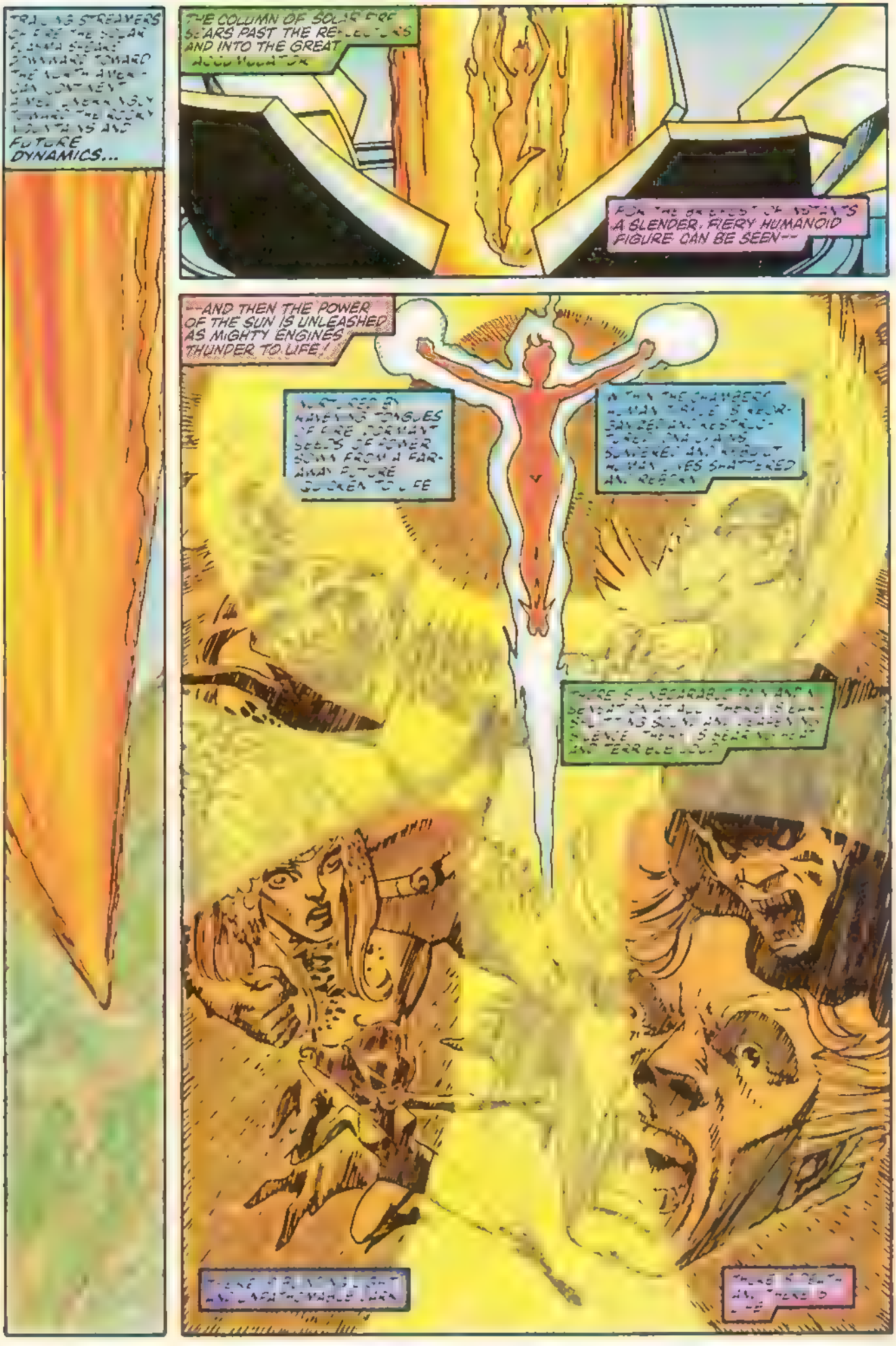

TODAY THEN, IS A SPECIAL EVENT AS AN UNUSUAL GROUP OF NEWCOMERS GATHERS IN THE EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM...
--SO THERE I WAS, 5 POINTS BEHIND, DEEP IN MY OWN TERRITORY FOURTH DOWN AND ONLY SECONDS TO PLAY, AND THE ENTIRE DALLAS SQUAD ABOUT TO SQUASH ME LIKE A BUG.
I TURNED ON TH' OL' MAGIC, DAZZLED 'EM WITH FOOTWORK, DUCKED THROUGH A HOLE AND DANCED NINETY-THREE YARDS TO ANOTHER TOUCHDOWN.
RIGHT.
SO FAR, HARRY, IN THAT GAME ALONE YOU RUSHED SIX THOUSAND YARDS AND MADE FOURTEEN TOUCHDOWNS.
NEANDERTHAL.
DO WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO THIS CRAP?
TAKE IT EASY, WALLY

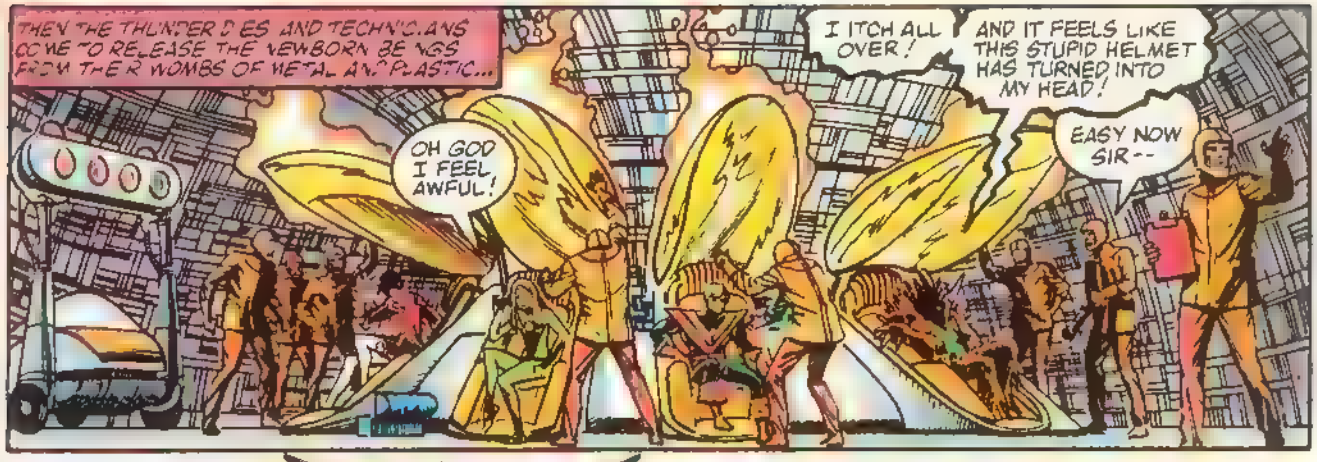
MAMA, YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET!
LEMME TELL YOU 'BOUT THE TIME I THREW A PASS SO HARD IT CRIPPLED THREE GUYS.
OH, BROTHER!
REMEMBER, TRACY--YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT UP FOOTBALL!
BUT ALL I SAID IS "I DON'T LIKE IT"!
HARRY ROBBINS, PRO LOUDMOUTH! I NEVER HEARD SUCH A CROCK!
DON'T SWEAT IT, WALLY. YOU KNOW HE'S ONLY DOING IT BECAUSE IT GRINDS YOUR JAWS!
YOU'RE JUST MAD BECAUSE HE'S MONOPOLIZING THE GIRLS!
ONE MAN STANDS ALOOF FROM THE GROUP, HIS FACE A GRIM PUZZLE...
LOOK AT THEM! THEY'RE CHILDREN! A BAND OF CHILDREN!
THEY BICKER AND WRANGLE, LAUGH AND JOKE--BUT IF THEY HAD ANY NOTION OF WHAT'S AHEAD, THEY'D RUN AWAY AND HIDE--IF THEY COULD.
IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS TRUE, THEY WILL HAVE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER.
BUT THE MAN NAMED ANDREW PENDRAGON DOES NOT COMMUNICATE HIS THOUGHTS TO THE OTHERS...
SO HELP ME IF THAT HYPERTHYROID MOOSE DOESN'T SHUT UP, I'M GOING TO BITE HIM ON THE KNEECAP!
DON'T BE SUCH A YO-YO, WALTER!
WELL, WELL--WALTER BONNER, PRO SHORTPERSON! WHAT'S THE MATTER, BABY BOY--
--ELEVATOR SHOES PINCHING YOU AGAIN?
HARRY, THE ONLY TIME YOU'VE TOUCHED A FOOTBALL IN THE LAST TEN YEARS--
--WAS IN A LITE BEER COMMERCIAL!
YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS, WALLY?
YOU GOT WHAT MY MOMMA USED TO CALL "AN OVERABUNDANCE OF SCRAWN."

ALL RIGHT, THAT'S IT! STEP DOWN HERE AND TAKE WHAT'S COMING TO YOU!
NO, NO--TELL YOU WHAT, SHORT STUFF, TAKE A FREE SHOT!
HARRY, WALTER --COME ON. YOU GUYS--
C'MON DO YOUR WORST! RIGHT ON TH' OL' BUTTON!
AHEM.
OOF!
HUH?
WHOOPS! HEH! SORRY WALLY, LET'S DO THIS SOME OTHER TIME!
ALL EYES TURN TO THE DARK MAN WHO HAS SILENTLY ENTERED THE ROOM.
MY NAME IS VANDERVECKEN.
MOOSIE, ROCCO AND LENNIE--THE THREE STREET PUNKS OF TWO DECADES PAST--WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD PRESSED TO RECOGNIZE THIS MAN AS THE SELFSAME DERELICT FROM THE RAINSWEPT ALLEY--
--BUT IT IS INDEED HE
SINCE THE DAY OF ITS ARRIVAL, THE MIND OF CALLISTRAX--LODGING IN THE BODY OF VANDERVECKEN--HAS CREATED, PIECE BY PIECE THE TECHNOLOGICAL EMPIRE THAT IS FUTURE DYNAMICS.
WELCOME.
AS YOU KNOW, YOU SEVEN ARE THE FIRST RESULTS OF AN INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM WHOSE GOAL IS TO CREATE A CADRE OF VERY SPECIAL AGENTS.
THERE IS MUCH FOR YOU TO LEARN AND VERY LITTLE TIME IN WHICH TO DO IT.
ONE THING'S NEVER BEEN QUITE CLEAR TO ME.
WHY US?
THE ANSWER TO THAT IS VERY SIMPLE. EACH OF YOU IS THE VERY BEST AT SOME SKILL OR SKILLS WHICH MAKES YOU VITALLY USEFUL TO US.
MR. HARRY ROBBINS, FOR EXAMPLE A GEOLOGIST WITH A VALUABLE BACKGROUND IN ATHLETICS.
OR MATTHEW BLACKFEATHER: LEGAL ATTORNEY FOR THE DAKOTA TRIBES WHO ALSO HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN SKYDIVING AND HANG-GLIDING...

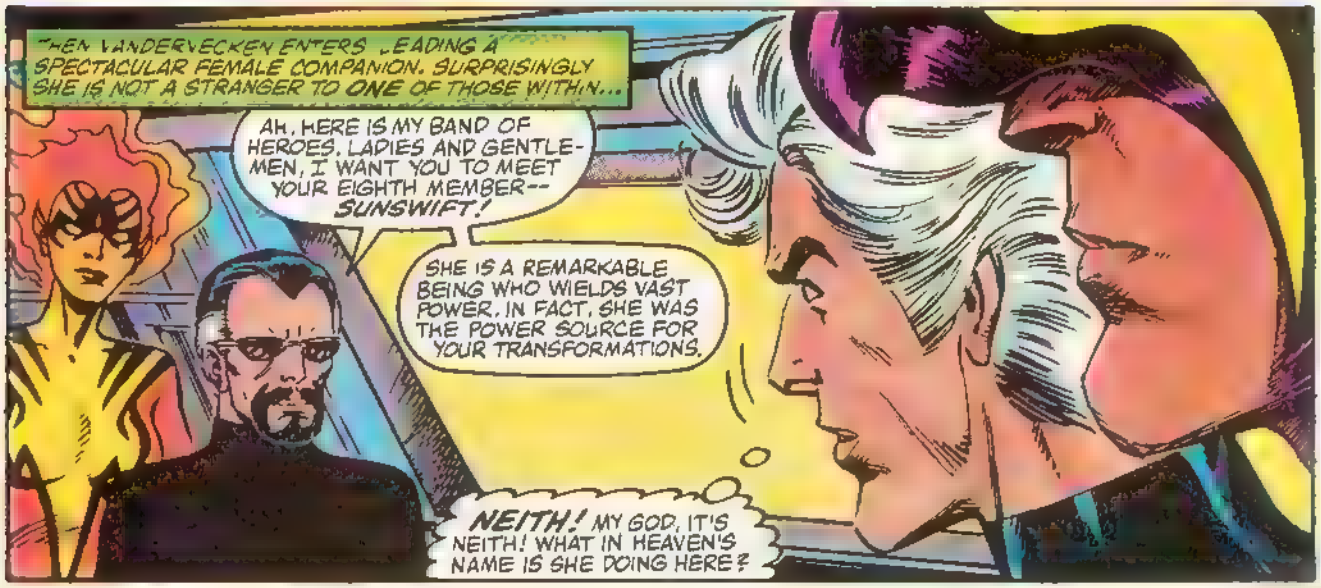

MISS TRACY WINTERS, HERE, IS A MARINE BIOLOGIST, DEEP SEA DIVER, AND WORLD-CLASS SWIMMER. DANA MORGAN IS AN OLYMPIC GOLD-MEDAL WINNER IN GYMNASTICS ALSO TRAINED AS AN AERIALIST AND ACROBAT.
OUR ALBINO FRIEND JONATHAN DARKNYT, IS A FORMER SECRET AGENT SKILLED IN INFILTRATION TECHNIQUES AND UNARMED COMBAT.
ANDREW PENDRAGON, THERE, IS A BRILLIANT STRATEGIST AND TACTICIAN WHO HAS USED HIS WITS TO AMASS AN ENORMOUS FORTUNE...
AS FOR WALTER BONNER--
--HE IS HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AGILE, ACROBATIC AND UNUSUALLY ADEPT AT THINKING ON HIS FEET.
STICK THAT IN YOUR JOCK-STRAP, WHIPPO.
FLAP!
ALL THOSE ABILITIES ARE VALUABLE TO US.
HOWEVER, BEFORE YOU CAN BE PUT TO WORK AS OPERATIVES FOR US, THERE IS ONE FINAL STEP IN THE PROCESS.
IF YOU WILL ALL PLEASE STEP INTO THE ELEVATOR--
--WE'LL GET ON WITH IT.
THE GROUP TURNS TO ACCOMPANY THE DARK MAN BUT ONE OF THEM HANGS BACK FOR A MOMENT--
--AND IF THE MAN CALLED VANDERVECKEN SEES THE OMINOUS GLINT IN ANDREW PENDRAGON'S EYE...
...HE DISMISSES IT.
AND SO, A SHORT TIME LATER...
I'M BEGINNIN' TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT ALL THIS.
ME TOO! WHAT'S WITH THIS WEIRD BATHING SUIT!?
I KNOW! THIS OUTFIT LOOKS LIKE A SUPER-HERO SUIT!
I GOT A FUNNY FEELING WE HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD ALL THE FACTS!
I DON'T KNOW, HARRY--YOU'RE GONNA LOOK PRETTY WILD IN THOSE GREEN SKIVVIES AND THAT DUMB HELMET!


NINETY-THREE MILLION MILES SUNWARD: A GREAT BALL OF PLASMA LEAPS OUT INTO SPACE!
WHILE BACK ON EARTH SEVEN BEWILDERED HUMANS FIND THEMSELVES LOCKED IN STRANGE FUTURISTIC COCOONS, ALONE WITH THEIR THOUGHTS...
WHY ON EARTH DID I AGREE TO THIS?
I'M SCARED. WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
IF I'M RIGHT, THIS WILL GIVE ME THE POWER I REQUIRE AND THE ALLIES I'LL NEED...
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS STUPID HELMET FOR?
MOTHER!
BACK OUT IN SPACE, THE SEETHING BALL OF STARSTUFF APPROACHES THE OUTER FRINGES OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE...
...AND DROPS EARTHWARD IN A FIERY PLUNGE TOWARD THE BLUE-AND-GREEN PLANET!
BELOW, IN THE SPRAWLING FUTURE DYNAMICS COMPLEX, A HUGE STRUCTURE SUDDENLY SPLITS OPEN AS TWIN DOME-HALVES ROLL BACK--
--TO REVEAL PETAL-LIKE REFLECTORS SURROUNDING A HUGE ENERGY ACCUMULATOR WITHIN THE DOME!

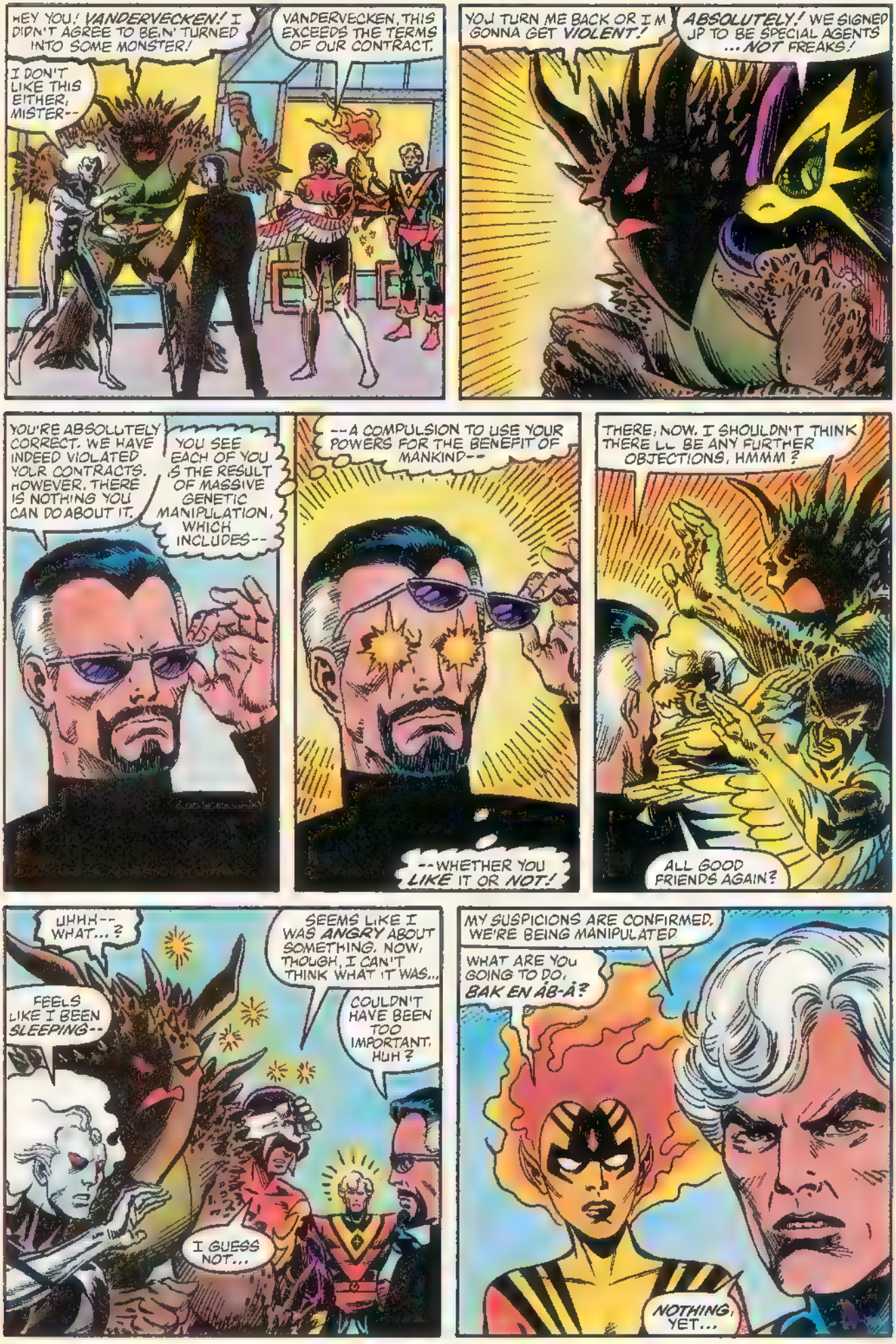

TRAILING STREAMERS OF FIRE THE SOLAR PLASMA SPEARS DOWNWARD TOWARD THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT AND OVERWHELMS TORNADO ALLEY AS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND FUTURE DYNAMICS...
THE COLUMN OF SOLAR FIRE SEARS PAST THE REFLECTORS AND INTO THE GREAT ACCUMULATOR
FOR THE BRIEFEST OF INSTANTS A SLENDER, FIERY HUMANOID FIGURE CAN BE SEEN--
--AND THEN THE POWER OF THE SUN IS UNLEASHED AS MIGHTY ENGINES THUNDER TO LIFE!
LAST SEEN HAVEN AS TONGUES OF FIRE FORWARD SEEDS OF POWER SOWN FROM A FAR-AWAY FUTURE QUICKEN TO LIFE
WITHIN THE CHAMBERS HUMAN FIGURE SCREWS SANDERS AND STEELS FACES AND HANDS SCREAMS AND ABOUT HUMAN LIVES SHATTERED AN REBORN
THERE IS UNBEARABLE PAIN AND DESPAIR ON IT ALL THERE IS DARKNESS AS SOUND AND FEAR AND SILENCE THERE IS DEATH TO HOPE AND TERRIBLE DOUBT
THERE IS ONLY ONE PLACE AND ONE TIME TO BE
THERE IS DEATH AND THERE IS LIFE


THEN THE THUNDERBIRDS AND TECHNICIANS COME TO RELEASE THE NEWBORN BEINGS FROM THEIR WOMBS OF METAL AND PLASTIC...
OH GOD I FEEL AWFUL!
I ITCH ALL OVER!
AND IT FEELS LIKE THIS STUPID HELMET HAS TURNED INTO MY HEAD!
EASY NOW SIR--

THEN AT LAST THEY ARE USHERED INTO A NEARBY BRIEFING ROOM TO CONFRONT THEIR NEW IDENTITIES:
HARRY ROBBINS IS TERRAYNE, THE EARTHMOVER.
WALTER BONNER IS BLACKMANE.
ANDREW PENDRAGON HAS BECOME AVATAR.
MATTHEW BLACKFEATHER IS WEREHAWK.
DANA MORGAN'S MOSQUITO.
TRACY WINTERS IS SILKIE.
JOHNATHAN DARKNYT IS SILVER SHADOW.

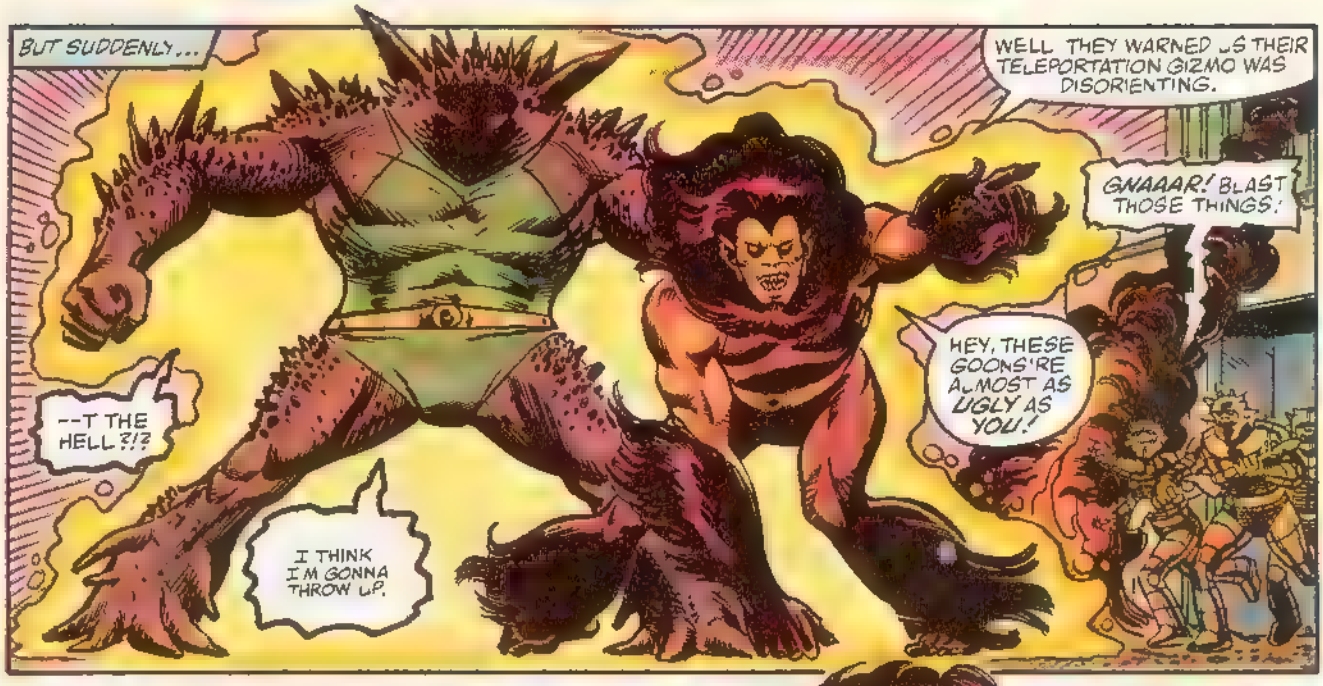

THEN VANDERVECKEN ENTERS LEADING A SPECTACULAR FEMALE COMPANION. SURPRISINGLY SHE IS NOT A STRANGER TO ONE OF THOSE WITHIN...
AH, HERE IS MY BAND OF HEROES. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WANT YOU TO MEET YOUR EIGHTH MEMBER-- SUNSWIFT!
SHE IS A REMARKABLE BEING WHO WIELDS VAST POWER. IN FACT, SHE WAS THE POWER SOURCE FOR YOUR TRANSFORMATIONS.
NEITH! MY GOD, IT'S NEITH! WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME IS SHE DOING HERE?

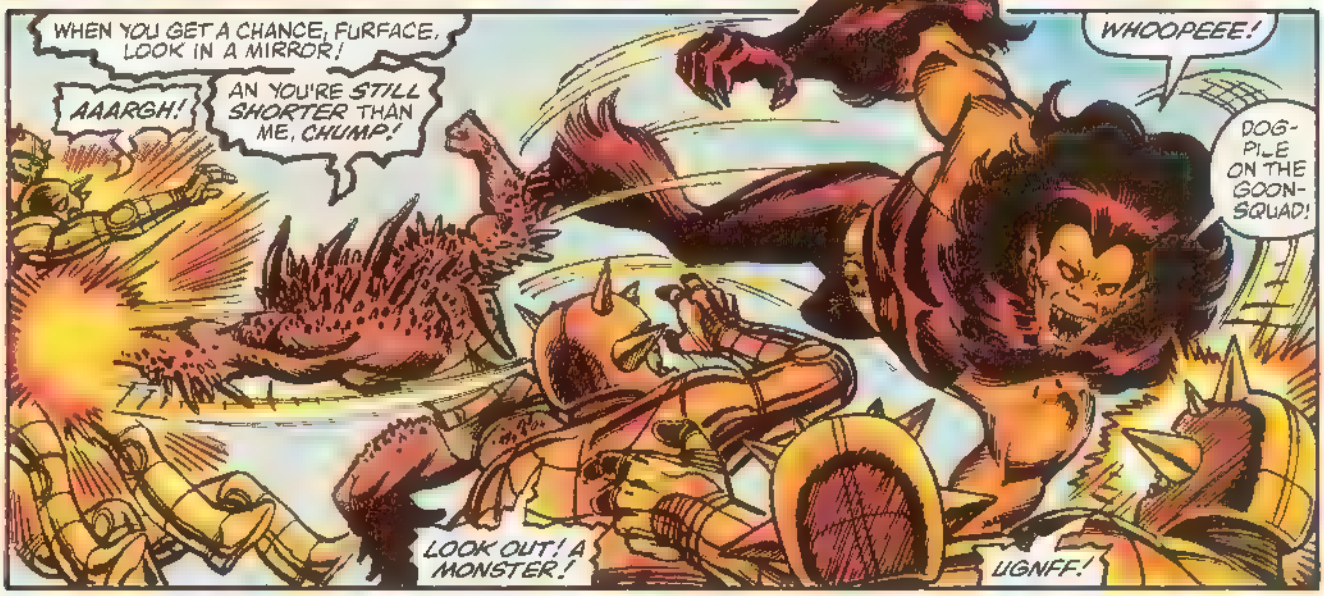
GREETINGS FELLOW BEINGS.
SUNSWIFT LIVES, AMAZINGLY ENOUGH, IN THE SUN.
SHE MUST SHED A GREAT DEAL OF HER ENERGY IN ORDER TO COME TO EARTH--
--OTHERWISE SHE MIGHT SET THE ENTIRE PLANET AFIRE. YES, I KNOW.
ANET' HRÁ-K. NEFER NEITH; ÁBÁ EM RESTU HENNU EN NET'EMUI HRÁ-K.
Ī-NA ER MERER ÀB-A MER. ANET' HRÁ-K UĀ
NEITH--AH SUNSWIFT--AND I ARE OLD ...FRIENDS. WE GO BACK A VERY LONG WAY
WHAAAT?!
THEY MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO TOUCH, BUT THE LOOK THAT PASSES BETWEEN THEM IS UNMISTAKABLE.
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN NEITH?
WELL, BEST BELOVED, BUT LONELY. AND YOU?
BUT BEFORE AVATAR CAN REPLY, AN ANGRY BELLOW SPLITS THE A.R...
AAAUUUGGGHH!!
LOOK WHAT HE'S DONE TO ME!!
OH, I DON'T KNOW, HARRY--
--I THINK IT SUITS YOU. NOW YOU'RE NINE FEET TALL--
--AND FOURTEEN FEET UGLY!
HAR HAR!
WHOOPS! SEE YA!
THIS ISN'T FUNNY!!
THOOM!


HEY YOU! VANDERVECKEN! I DIDN'T AGREE TO BE IN' TURNED INTO SOME MONSTER!
I DON'T LIKE THIS EITHER, MISTER--
VANDERVECKEN, THIS EXCEEDS THE TERMS OF OUR CONTRACT.
YOU TURN ME BACK OR I'M GONNA GET VIOLENT!
ABSOLUTELY! WE SIGNED UP TO BE SPECIAL AGENTS ... NOT FREAKS!
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY CORRECT. WE HAVE INDEED VIOLATED YOUR CONTRACTS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.
YOU SEE EACH OF YOU IS THE RESULT OF MASSIVE GENETIC MANIPULATION, WHICH INCLUDES--
--A COMPULSION TO USE YOUR POWERS FOR THE BENEFIT OF MANKIND--
--WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!
THERE, NOW. I SHOULDN'T THINK THERE'LL BE ANY FURTHER OBJECTIONS, HMMM?
ALL GOOD FRIENDS AGAIN?
UHHH-- WHAT...?
FEELS LIKE I BEEN SLEEPING--
SEEMS LIKE I WAS ANGRY ABOUT SOMETHING, NOW, THOUGH, I CAN'T THINK WHAT IT WAS...
COULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOO IMPORTANT, HUH?
I GUESS NOT...
MY SUSPICIONS ARE CONFIRMED. WE'RE BEING MANIPULATED
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, BAK EN ÅB-Å?
NOTHING, YET...

"VANDERVECKEN MAY INDEED BE TRYING TO SAVE THE WORLD--
"--BUT HE HAS MUCH TO ANSWER FOR!"
SAY LOOK THERE
WHAT IS IT TRUSCOTT?
RED ALERT, SIR!
THE ENEMY HAS MADE ITS MOVE SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED!
THEY'VE STRUCK IN FOUR PLACES--
THEY'RE COMING UP OUT OF THE GROUND IN ST LOUIS..
"THERE'S AN AERIAL FORTRESS ATTACKING CHICAGO--
"THEY'VE GOT A SEA SERPENT THREATENING SAN DIEGO--
"--AND SOME BIZARRE ENERGY MANIFESTATION IS SUCKING UP NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM A STORAGE FACILITY IN THE SOUTHWEST!"
ALL RIGHT MY FRIENDS THIS IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT, YOU'LL BE BRIEFED ON YOUR NEW POWERS BUT YOU MUST LEARN TO USE THEM 'ON THE JOB' SO TO SPEAK.
WITH YOUR SKILLS...AND LUCK...YOU SHOULD BE OKAY.
YOU'VE ALL BEEN TRAINED TO THE PEAK OF YOUR NATURAL SKILLS--
"--WITH YOUR NEW POWERS YOU SHOULD BE UNBEATABLE
I'LL BET!
ALL RIGHT HEROES, LET'S GO!
YEAH LET'S GO RIP THEIR ARMS AND LEGS OFF

BLACKMANE
AND
TERRAYNE
THE EARTHMOVER
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI: JUST A FEW MILES FROM THE FAMED GATEWAY ARCH IS THE SHREWSBURY RESEARCH CENTER, PRIMARILY ENGAGED IN A SEARCH FOR NEW ENERGY SOURCES. ONE OF THEIR PROJECTS USES A PROTOTYPE BREEDER REACTOR.
IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUSY WORKDAY, A GIANT DRILL MACHINE HAS JUST RIPPED UP OUT OF THE CENTRAL COURTYARD. A HORDE OF ARMORED RAIDERS POURS FORTH, BLASTING THE SECURITY GUARDS WITH WITHERING F.R.E.
AAAARGH!
FORWARD, PIGS! SWAT PUNY GUARDS DOWN AND GET INSIDE!
MOVE, YOU SLIME-BALLS.
AIM STRAIGHT YOU WALL-EYED NOSEPICKER GET DOOR OPEN
GNAAR! DON'T SPIT AT ME, LIVER-LIPS!
YOUR MOTHER EATS OLD ARMY SOCKS -- WITH A SPOON!
DOOR OPEN! INSIDE WART-SUCKERS! GET STUFF WE NEED! KILL HUMANS!
OLD TURNIP-NOSE! HOW COME HE GIVE ORDERS?
HE GOT SOMETHING ON SERGEANT. BEEN MADE CORPORAL.
THAT'S T--GET ALL STUFF MARKED 'RADIO-ACTIVE'. DESTROY ALL REST. HURRY, GARBAGE-EATERS!
WHAT DO LEADERS WANT STUFF FOR?
OUR TIME-FORTRESS LOST MUCH FUEL-STUFF COMING INTO THIS TIME. POCK-FACE! NEED TO REPLACE FROM HUMANS SUPPLIES!

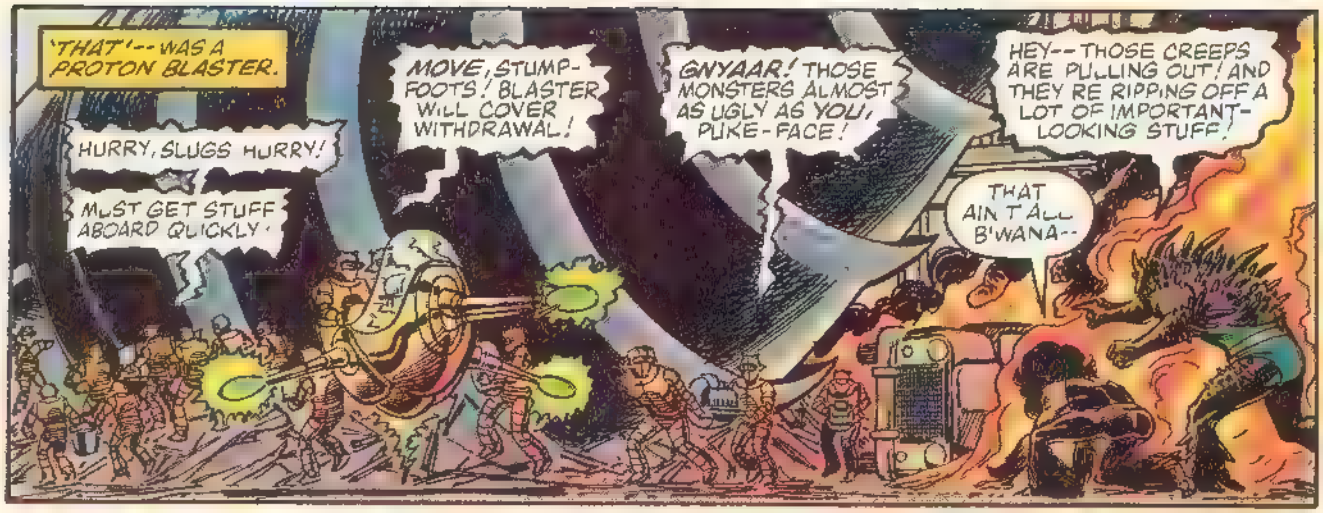

BUT SUDDENLY...
WELL, THEY WARNED US THEIR TELEPORTATION GIZMO WAS DISORIENTING.
GNAAAR! BLAST THOSE THINGS!
HEY, THESE GOONS'RE ALMOST AS UGLY AS YOU!
--T THE HELL?!?
I THINK I'M GONNA THROW UP.


WHEN YOU GET A CHANCE, FURFACE, LOOK IN A MIRROR!
AAARGH!
AN YOU'RE STILL SHORTER THAN ME, CHUMP!
WHOOPEEE!
DOG-PILE ON THE GOON-SQUAD!
LOOK OUT! A MONSTER!
UGNFF!

HAR! FIRST FIGHT I WAS EVER IN, WHERE I WASN'T THE SHORTEST GUY THERE.
LOOKY HERE! MY CLAWS CAN PEEL THE ARMOR RIGHT OFF THIS CREEP'S HEAD! GOOD THING I'M NO KILLER --IMAGINE WHAT I COULD DO TO HIS FACE!
EEEP!

WHOOPS!
--PARDON ME!
--PARDON ME.
--SCUSE ME.
SCUSE ME!
GRAB HIM FOOLS!
GRAB HIM YOURSELF, TURNIP-NOSE!

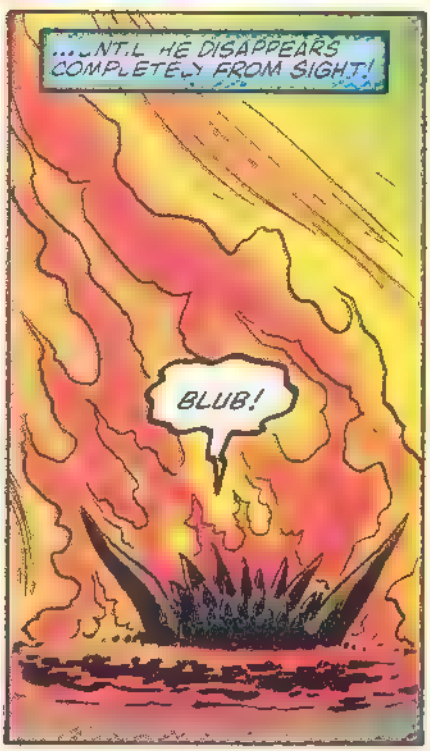
OW OW!
EVEN WHEN I MAKE MYSELF ROCK HARD, THAT HURTS!
THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO STOP THEM FROM SHOOTING!
WHOOPS! SORRY, FELLA, IT'S TOUGH TO GRAB HOLD OF SWAMP-OOZE, ISN'T IT?
GRAB HIM, YOU SLIME-LICKERS!
GYUCCK! NOT ME!
TERRAYNE SHOVES HIS ARM INTO THE GROUND--REACHING WITH MENTAL 'FINGERS' HE MANIPULATES LOCAL GEOTHERMAL PATTERNS.
SUDDENLY, A DOZEN GEYSERS ERUPT UNDER THE ARMORED RAIDERS!
HA! THAT'LL SLOW 'EM DOWN A BIT! GOOD THING VANDERVECKEN BRIEFED US ON OUR POWERS--!
SUDDENLY--
GANGWAY, B'WANA!
IT'S GETTIN' MEAN OVER THERE!
WATCH OUT, YOU FURRY JERK!
SPOING
LOOK OUT! THEY'VE GOT A--
--BIG GUN!
OWWOOO, THAT SMARTS!
ANSWER THE PHONE, WILLYA?
OH, SHUT UP!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

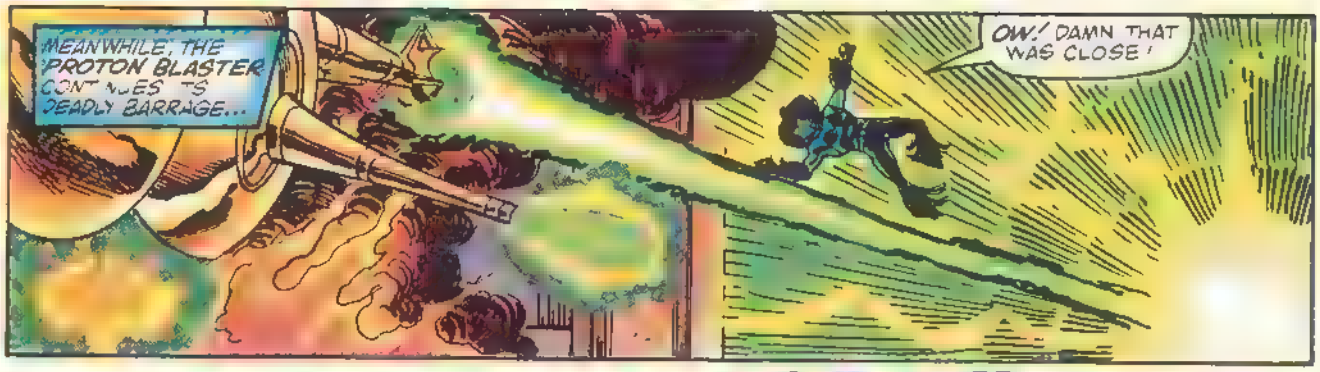

'THAT'--WAS A PROTON BLASTER.
HURRY, SLUGS HURRY!
MUST GET STUFF ABOARD QUICKLY!
MOVE, STUMP-FOOTS! BLASTER WILL COVER WITHDRAWAL!
GNYAAR! THOSE MONSTERS ALMOST AS UGLY AS YOU, PUKE-FACE!
HEY--THOSE CREEPS ARE PULLING OUT! AND THEY RE RIPPING OFF A LOT OF IMPORTANT-LOOKING STUFF!
THAT AIN T ALL B'WANA--

--THEY RE GONNA SHOOT THAT THING AGAIN!
SH-ZAK
WHAT'S WORSE THEY RE GONNA SHOOT IT AT ME!
HO-LEE SH
MOVE YOUR BUTT, DUMMY!
YOU SAID IT!
SHZAK

AS THE DEADLY BARRAGE CONTINUES, TERRAYNE THE EARTHMOVER DOES AN AMAZING THING--
:SIGH:
Y WANT ANYTHING DONE, Y'GOTTA DO IT YOURSELF.

--HE ACTUALLY BEGINS TO SINK INTO THE GROUND, BECOMING PART OF THE EARTH ITSELF--
STAY OUTTA THE WAY FURFACE!
THIS IS A JOB FOR-- TERRAYNE, THE EARTHMOVER!


...UNTIL HE DISAPPEARS COMPLETELY FROM SIGHT!
BLUB!


MEANWHILE, THE PROTON BLASTER CONTINUES ITS DEADLY BARRAGE...
OW! DAMN THAT WAS CLOSE!

COME ON, HARRY, WHAT'S KEEPING YOU?
MRS BONNER'S BOY, WALTER, REALLY HATES BEING A TARGET FOR THOSE TURKEYS.
HAARRRR-RRRYYYYYYY!

SHAKABOOM
OH.
THERE YOU ARE.

FLOWING UPWARD FROM THE GROUND TERRAVE REAPPEARS.
WHAT THE HELL TOOK YOU SO LONG? THEY ALMOST GOT ME!
'ALMOST?' NUTS I THOUGHT SURE I'D STALLED LONG ENOUGH!

WHILE YOU WERE MAKING UNDERGROUND MUD-PIES, THOSE GOONS LOADED UP THEIR MACHINE. NOW THEY'RE SPLITTING!
CAN YOU STOP EM?

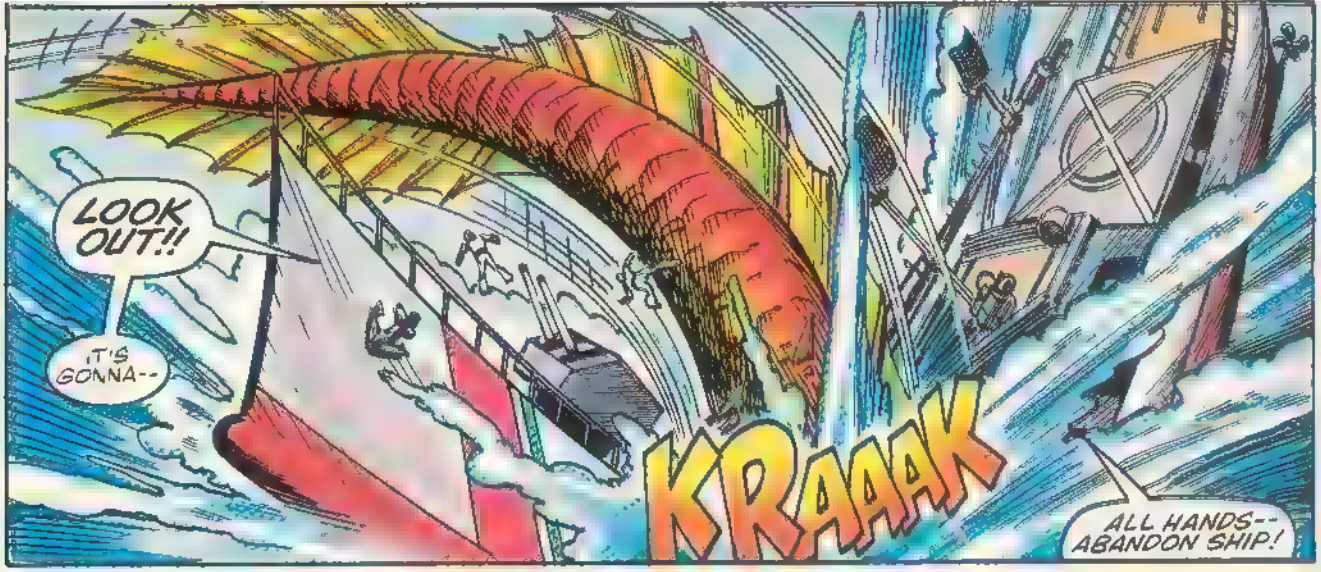
I DON'T KNOW, I'LL TAKE A WHACK AT IT--

TERRAYNE SINKS INTO THE GROUND ONCE MORE, THE ATOMS OF HIS BODY MINGLING WITH THOSE OF THE EARTH AND THEN PHASING PAST WITHOUT LEAVING ANY DISTURBANCE.
THERE IT IS.
BIG MACHINE, AND MAKIN' A RUN FOR IT. FUNNY, I SEEM TO HAVE SOME NEW SENSE TO SUBSTITUTE FOR SIGHT 'CAUSE I CAN SEE THE DRILL PLAIN AS DAY.
IT'S GOIN' PRETTY FAST IF I'M GONNA TRY ANY-THING, IT'S GOTTA BE BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF RANGE OF MY POWERS...
UNFORTUNATELY BEFORE TERRAYNE CAN ACT THE RAIDERS TRY A TRICK OF THEIR OWN--
--PROVING THAT THEY CAN SEE HIM TOO.
MISSILES! DRILL MISSILES!
HOLY SMOKE!
THEY'RE ZEROING IN ON ME. MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF HOMING SYSTEM!
TERRAYNE TURNS AND RACES FOR THE SURFACE AS THE DEADLY MISSILES CONVERGE BEHIND HIM--
KA-BLAM
--AND JUST ABOUT MAKES IT

AND SO..
WHAT THE-- WHO'RE YOU?
ALL RIGHT YOU FREAKOS GET YOUR HANDS UP AND FREEZE!
OW! MY HEAD! F'PETESAKE, YOU CLOWNS, SHUDDUP!
YOU--LUMPY! GET UP FROM THERE!
YOU GUYS ARE UNDER ARREST! THEY'RE GONNA THROW AWAY THE KEY FOR THIS
LISTEN CAPTAIN, WE DIDN'T DO THIS
WE STOPPED THOSE BOZOS WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS I'M BLACKMANE AND HE'S TERRAYNE, THE EARTHMOVER!
--AND WHO THE HELL'S GONNA FILL IN THIS HOLE?!?
SO WHAT? I NEVER HEARD OF EITHER OF YOU!
OH YEAH?! WELL WE NEVER HEARD OF YOU EITHER BUCKET-BRAIN!
ALL RIGHT THAT'S IT GET MOVING OR WE PUT HOLES IN YOU! MARCH!
I'VE HAD ABOUT ALL I CAN STAND OF THIS BRASS HAT!
THERE! PLAY AROUND WITH THAT FOR AWHILE PATTON.
WELL THAT GIVES THEM A HOBBY BY THE TIME THEY GET LOOSE WE'LL BE LONG GONE!
ADIOS CHUMPS
WHAT THE--
CA-CAPTAIN! H-HE TURNED THE PAVEMENT INTO MUD OR SOMETHIN'.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, FARNSWORTH--THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE

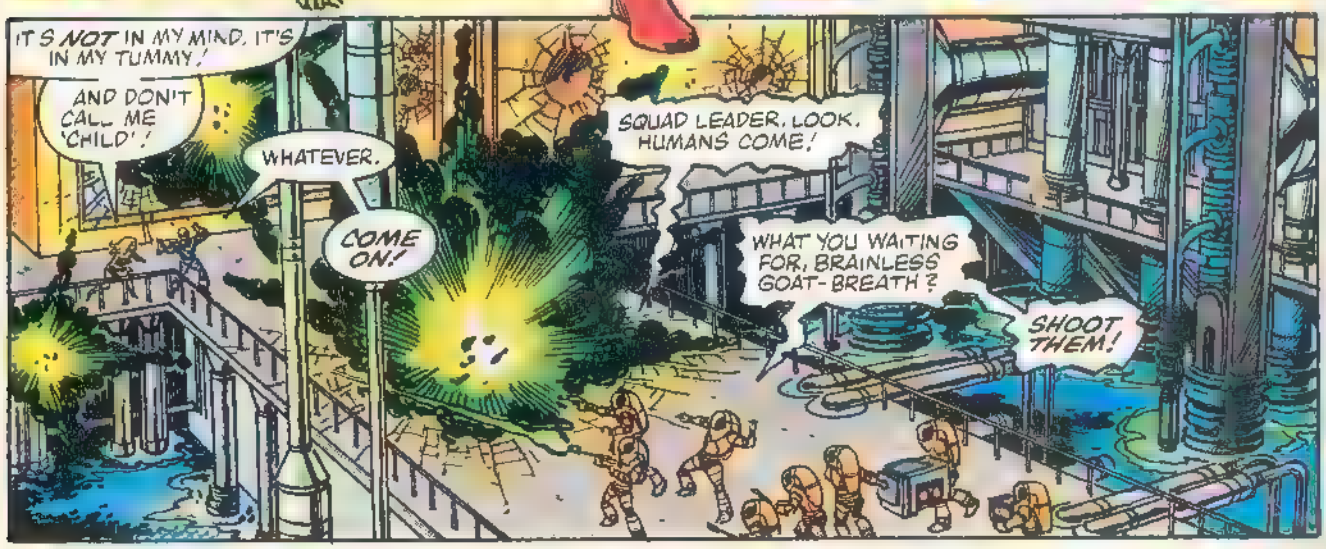
AND SO--
TELEPHONE
THERE! JUST WHAT WE NEED!
I HOPE THIS WORKS LIKE THEY SAID.
FIRST I DIAL FUTURE DYNAMICS--
--THEN WE ACTIVATE THE GIZMO ON THE RINGS THEY GAVE EACH OF US--
"--AND PRESTO!"
POP!
LIH-OH! THIS SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE FUTURE DYNAMICS!
UH--HARRY...
EEEEK!
UH--MA'AM, UH, THIS AIN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE--UH--MA'AM?
TAKE IT EASY MA'AM!
GET OUT OF MY BEDROOM YOU--
--YOU HAIR-BAG!
LADY, OW!
WHAP WHAP WHAM WHAM
HELP! POLICE! YOU VICIOUS BRUTE! HOW DARE YOU MOLEST A HELPLESS WOMAN IN HER OWN HOME!? TAKE YOUR MOLDY FRIEND AND BEAT IT!
LE-SSEE NOW,
'S HARD TO DIAL WITH THESE FAT FINGERS!
C'MON, FANGFACE!
F'GODSAKE, HARRY I HOPE YOU DIALED IT RIGHT THIS TIME!
POP!
TAKE THAT, YOU--OOP! WHERE D THEY GO?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
I'VE BEEN ASSAULTED BY A WALKING COMPOST-HEAP AND A FUGITIVE FROM A NINE LIVES COMMERCIAL!
TO THINK I MOVED FROM MANHATTAN TO GET AWAY FROM WEIRDOS!

JUST NORTH IS THE CABRILLO INSTITUTE A SEASIDE
FOR THE GENERATION OF ELECTRICAL POWER BY U
THE DAY'S WEA
BRIGr
OUR BEAST HAS CLEARED HARBOR DEFENSES--NOW IS OUR JOB!
MASTERS MAN
NWHILE OUT IN THE
A LONE COAST GUARD
LET 'IM HAVE IT!
718
UH--I HATE TO TELL YOU, SKIPPER--
--BUT THAT THING SHAKES OFF FIVE-INCH SHELLS LIKE RAINDROPS!


LOOK OUT!!
IT'S GONNA--
KRAAAK
ALL HANDS-- ABANDON SHIP!

MEANWHILE, A PAIR OF NEWCOMERS ARRIVES ON THE SCENE...
OH-OH LOOK THERE.
IT'S A FULL SCALE RAID!
UNHH-- WHERE?!?
--OH!
HOW COME YOU'RE NOT HIT BY THE DISORIENTATION EFFECT?

IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND CHILD.

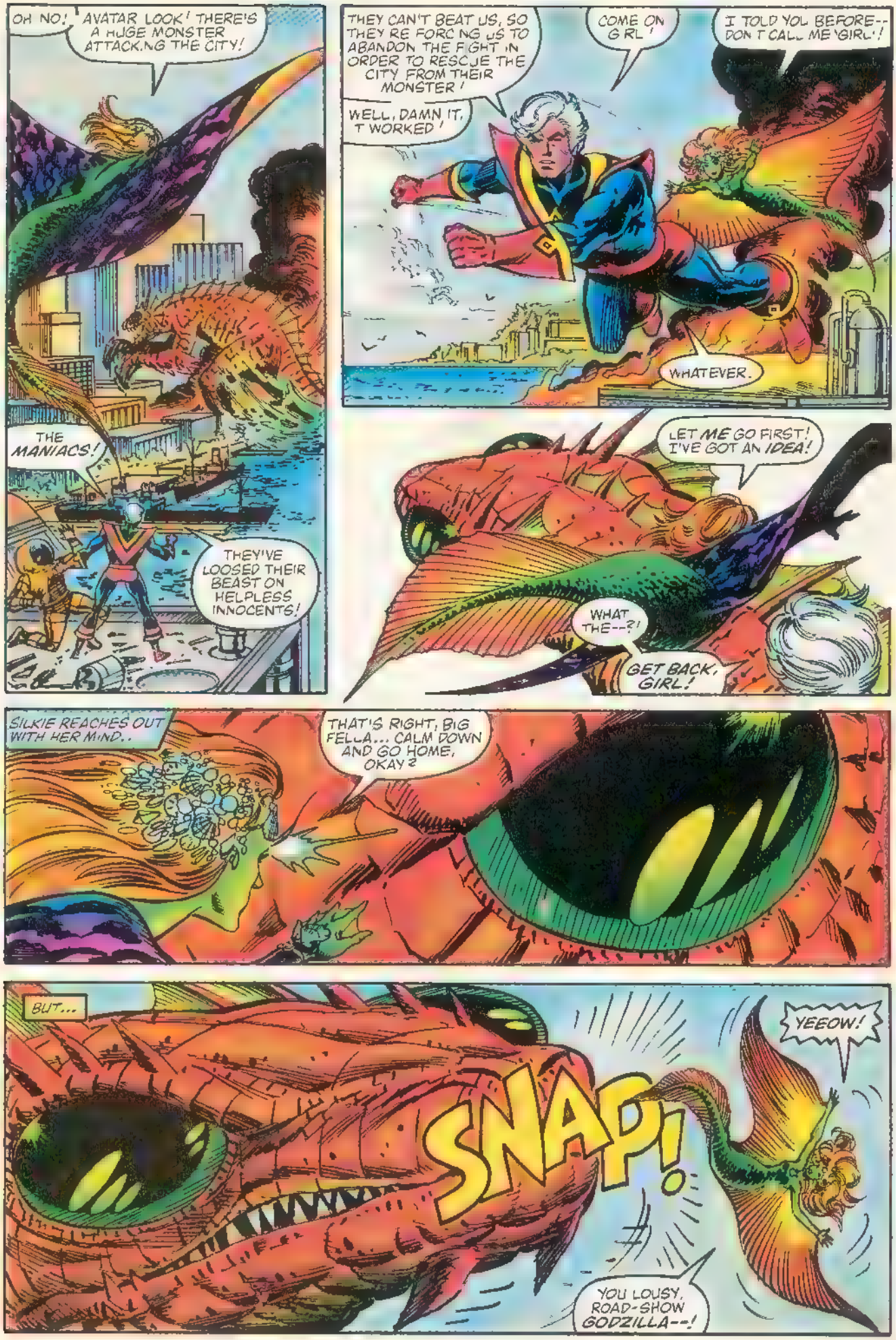

IT'S NOT IN MY MIND, IT'S IN MY TUMMY!
AND DON'T CALL ME 'CHILD'!
WHATEVER.
COME ON!
SQUAD LEADER, LOOK. HUMANS COME!
WHAT YOU WAITING FOR, BRAINLESS GOAT-BREATH?
SHOOT THEM!

HO! GRONNAK HAVE SURPRISE FOR STUPID HUMANS!
--LITTLE BOMB WILL BLOW HUMANS TO DOG MEAT!
HAW HAW--
HUH?
SILKIE LOOK OUT
VOOMP
EEEEK!
OH MY RINGING EARS
ARE WE STILL ALIVE?
OF COURSE
I WAS ABLE TO SHIELD YOU SOMEWHAT FROM THE EXPLOSION COME ON GIRL
DON'T CALL ME 'GIRL' EITHER!
WHATEVER
ANYWAY THESE BRUTES MEAN BUSINESS
OOOF!
GYAARG!
GRAB HIM! PUSH HIM!
DROWN HIM!
I'M TRYING TO!
PUSH HARDER, LIZARD-FACE!
HAR! WE HAVE HIM NOW! HOLD HIM UNDER.
DROWN HIM TIL HE'S DEAD!
STUPID DROWNED IS DEAD
SO MAKE HIM EAT WATER TOADBOTTOM!

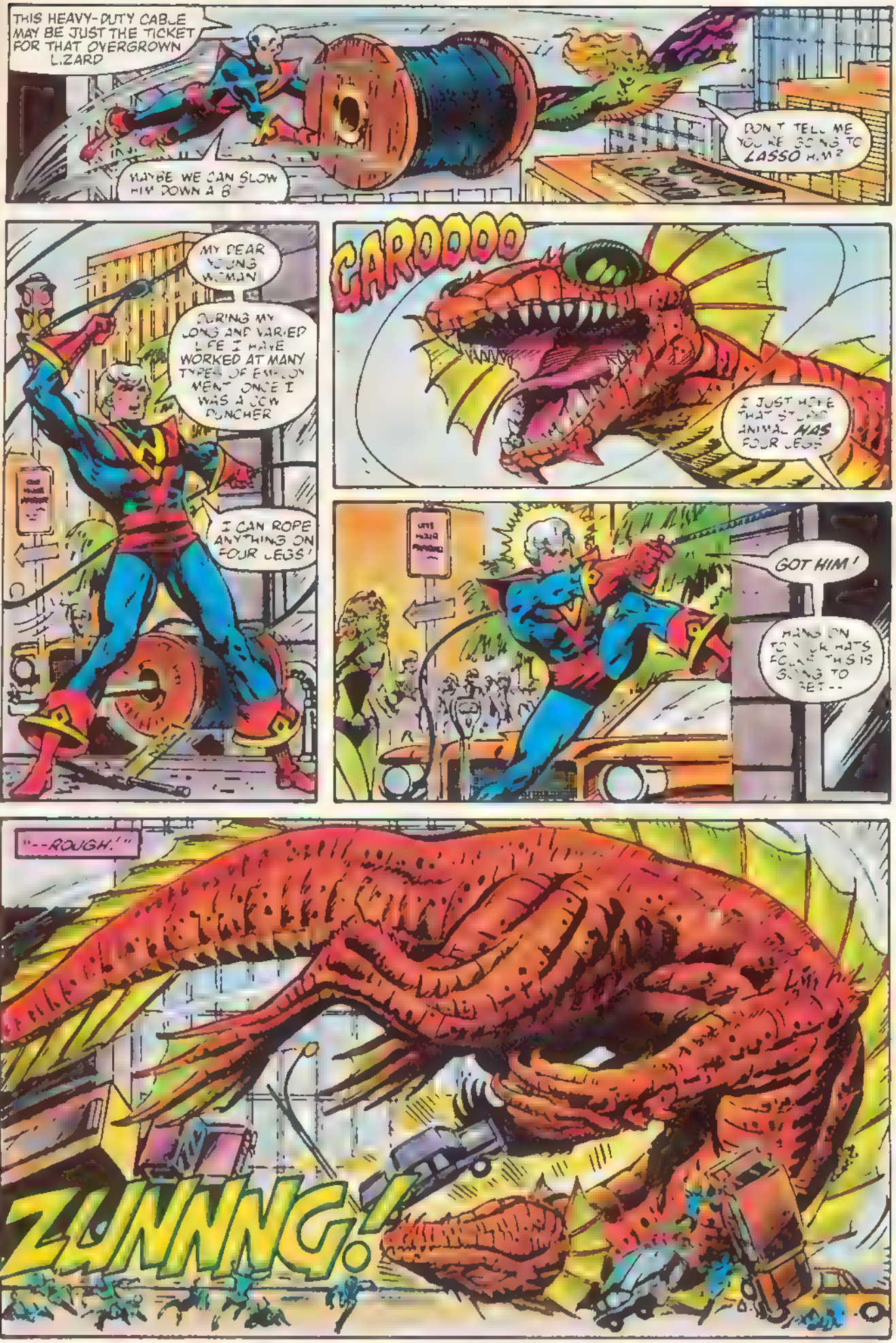
--BUT...
SHPOW!
MEANWHILE...
WELL, I GUESS AVATAR CAN HANDLE THAT BUNCH.
HOWEVER, I TH NK I SHOULD GET MYSELF SOME ATITUDE.
--WHOOPS!
HAR! GOT GIRL!
DON T YOU CALL ME 'G.RL EITHER
KRZZT
YAAAARG!
YOU SEE--ONE OF THE THINGS I CAN DO IS RELEASE AN ENERGY-CHARGE JUST LIKE AN ELECTRIC EEL!
AND ANOTHER TH.NG I CAN DO--
SHOOT HER! SHOOT HER!
--IS CHANGE INTO A MANTAFORM THAT CAN SWIM--OR FLY!
SHOOTING AT ME AGAIN ?!
IT JUST OCCURS TO ME--I CAN GET MYSELF KILLED OUT HERE!
WELL HERE'S ANOTHER SURPRISE FOR YOU!

SHOOOSH
I CAN DO THINGS WITH WATER!
GYAAAH!
WATER HAS GONE CRAZY! HOLD ON TO SOMETHING!
GIRL IS EVIL DEMON!
SO THERE!
WHAT WE DO NOW, HOT SHOT SQUAD LEADER?
OH SHUT UP!
MEANWHILE, AVATAR HAS HIS HANDS FULL...
SHOOT! SMASH HIM!
BLUE HUMAN WALKS THROUGH LASERS! GRENADES NOT STOP HIM!
HELP!
THERE--MAYBE THAT WILL MAKE YOU STOP SHOOTING GUNS AT PEOPLE!
NOW, I THINK YOU SHOULD PUT BACK THE THINGS YOU'VE STOLEN.
KRRUMP
YAAAAH!
BUT, ON A NEARBY TONER...
PERFECT! BLUE DEMON DOESN'T SEE US, SQUAD LEADER!
SHOOT MISSILE, STUMPBRAIN!

SHOOT! SHOOT!
PUNT!
I'M SHOOTING! I'M SHOOTING!
OH, NO--!
WHAT THE HELL--?!
BLUE DEMON SEES US!
OH, NO! BLUE DEMON CAN FLY!
NO MATTER, STUPID! MISSILE HAS HOMING DEVICE!
UH-- SQUAD LEADER... I GOT BAD NEWS FOR YOU. BLUE DEMON IS COMING THIS WAY--
--AND MISSILE IS FOLLOWING!
OH, NOOOOOOO!
BLAAAMM!
BINGO!
HOW IN THE WORLD CAN VANDERVECKEN CONSIDER THESE STUMBLEBUMS TO BE A MENACE TO EARTH?
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
GET CONTROLLER! MAKE BEAST ATTACK CITY!
HAH! FINALLY, A GOOD IDEA!
AND SO, SHORTLY...
GARRROOOOO!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT A MONSTER CRAWLING OUT OF THE HARBOR!
STEVE! RALPH! GET MOVIN' OR YOU'LL WIND UP THE MAIN COURSE!
YOU SAID IT, MIKE! Y'DON'T HAFTA TELL US TWICE!

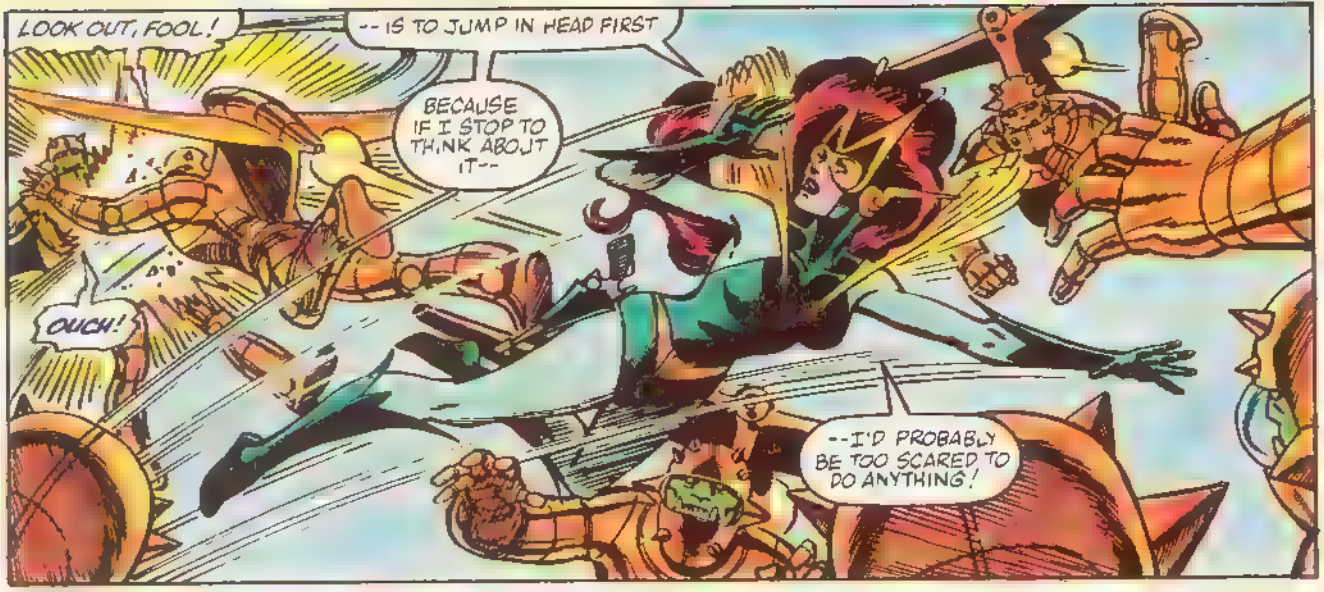

OH NO!
AVATAR LOOK! THERE'S A HUGE MONSTER ATTACKING THE CITY!
THE MANIACS!
THEY'VE LOOSED THEIR BEAST ON HELPLESS INNOCENTS!
THEY CAN'T BEAT US, SO THEY'RE FORCING US TO ABANDON THE FIGHT IN ORDER TO RESCUE THE CITY FROM THEIR MONSTER!
WELL, DAMN IT, IT WORKED!
COME ON GIRL!
I TOLD YOU BEFORE-- DON'T CALL ME 'GIRL'!
WHATEVER.
LET ME GO FIRST! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
WHAT THE--?!
GET BACK, GIRL!
SILKIE REACHES OUT WITH HER MIND..
THAT'S RIGHT, BIG FELLA... CALM DOWN AND GO HOME, OKAY?
BUT...
SNAP!
YEEOW!
YOU LOUSY, ROAD-SHOW GODZILLA--!

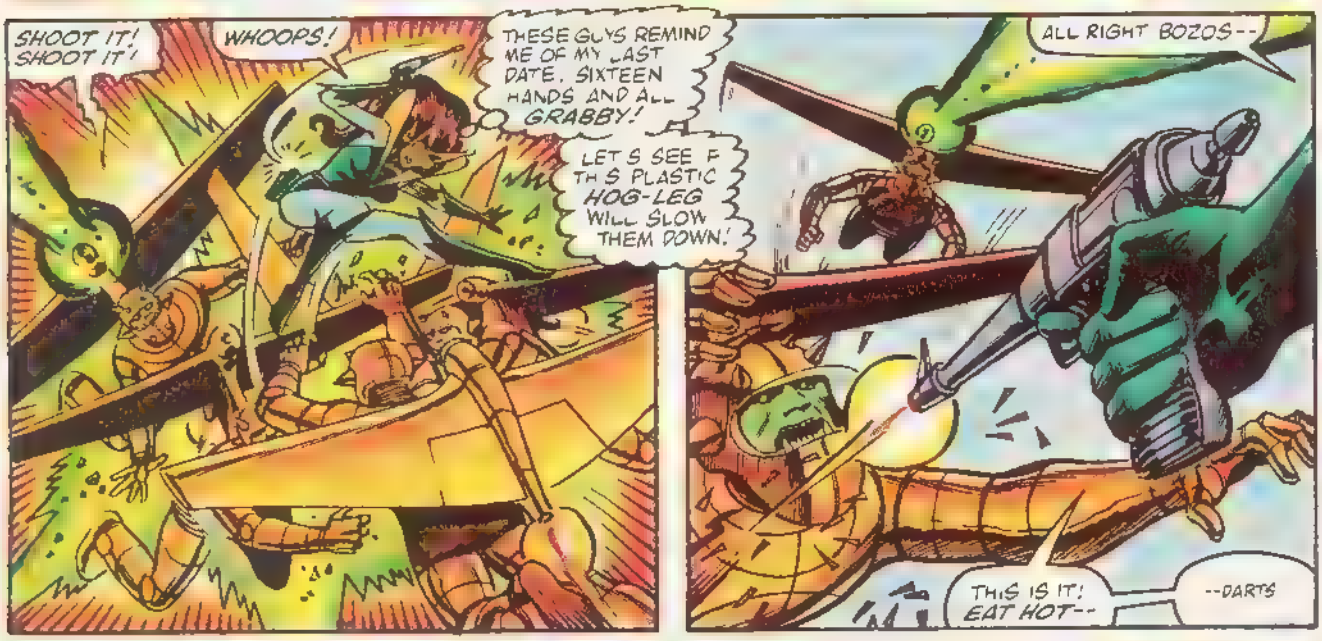
ARE YOU CRAZY?! WHAT ON EARTH WERE YOU TRYING TO DO?
UM--
WELL, Y'SEE, I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD CONTROL HIM MENTALLY!
WHAAAT?!?
WELLLL--I SAW IT IN A COMIC BOOK ONCE WHAT THE HEY, IT WAS WORTH A--
AVATAR!
LOOK OUT!
CHOMP
FASCINATING! THIS RIDICULOUS BEAST ACTUALLY SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO EAT ME!
FORTUNATELY I SEEM TO BE PROOF AGAINST THE THING'S JAWS!
WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME ABOUT ITS BREATH. WHOOIE!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS SEWER OPEN UP, TUNA BREATH.
POW!
A SUDDEN, DEVASTATING BLOW PULVERIZES THE BEAST'S FRONT TEETH -
--AND A FLIP OF THE ENRAGED BEAST'S HEAD SENDS AVATAR CRASHING INTO A NEARBY MARINE CONSTRUCTION YARD
MIRAMAR MARINE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
OH, MY GOSH!
AVATAR!
UNFFF!
CRAAASSH!
HEY YOU OKAY?
I'M FINE SILKE JUST FINE!
WELL, YOU DON'T SMELL SO GOOD PHEEEW!
HOW KIND OF YOU TO MENTION IT, SAY--
-I'VE GOT AN IDEA.


THIS HEAVY-DUTY CABLE MAY BE JUST THE TICKET FOR THAT OVERGROWN LIZARD
MAYBE WE CAN SLOW HIM DOWN A BIT
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO LASSO HIM?
MY DEAR YOUNG WOMAN
DURING MY LONG AND VARIED LIFE I HAVE WORKED AT MANY TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT ONCE I WAS A COW PUNCHER
I CAN ROPE ANYTHING ON FOUR LEGS!
GAROOOO
I JUST HOPE THAT STUPID ANIMAL HAS FOUR LEGS
GOT HIM!
HANG ON TO YOUR HATS FOLKS THIS IS GOING TO GET--
"--ROUGH!"
ZUNNG!

WELL, THAT TAKES CARE OF GODZILLA. NICELY GIFT WRAPPED AND LABELLED
NOW LET'S GO BACK AND GET THOSE RAIDERS
NEVER MIND THEY AVATAR I CHECKED-- THEY'VE ALREADY SPLIT BACK TO THE OCEAN.
ALL RIGHT LISTEN UP.
WE'VE GOT YOUR BEAST WRAPPED UP FOR YOU BUT I ADVISE YOU TO FIND SOME SAFE PLACE TO PUT HIM.
YES AND DON'T BOTHER ME BOTH ANGRY
WHAAAT?
HOLD ON NOW-
YOU DON'T MEAN YOU'RE LEAVING THAT THING IN THE STREET?
LOOK, WE'RE VERY BUSY PEOPLE--
THAT GREAT SMELLY BEAST IS BLOCKING TRAFFIC YOU GET IT OUT OF HERE!
TELEPHONE
OH, COME ON! YOU CAN'T EXPECT US TO DO EVERY-THING--!
POP

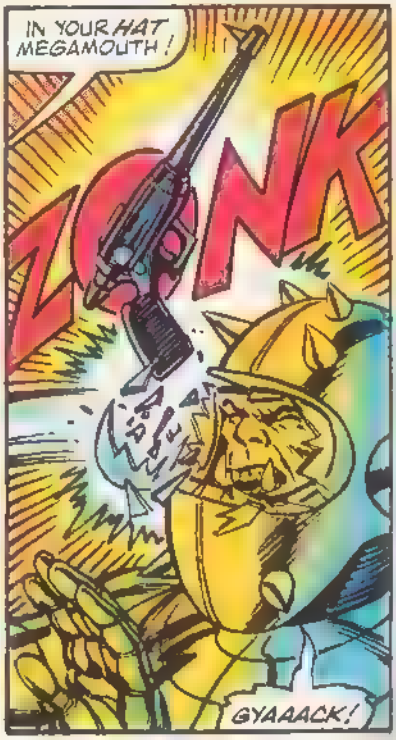
WEREHAWK AND MOSQUITO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS: MIDWESTERN GIANT T SPRAWLS ALONG THE SOUTH-WESTERN SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN.
CENTER OF INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE AND TRANSPORTATION, CHICAGO IS ACCUS-TOMED TO EXCITING EVENTS.
BUT IT HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN A WAR ZONE.
SHREEEE
WITHOUT WARNING, THE MIDDAY SKY IS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH FLYING INVADERS LAUNCHED FROM A GIANT AERIAL FORTRESS.
THE TARGET IS DOWNTOWN CHICAGO.
BRAAAMM
HOW DO THEY EXPECT ME TO STOP THAT?
IT'S US, WEREHAWK--
--THEY EXPECT US TO DO IT!
WEREHAWK AND MOSQUITO MATERIALIZE IN THE CENTER OF A RAGING BATTLE.
GOOD LORD!
IT'S LIKE A SCENE OUT OF 'WAR OF THE WORLDS!'
AND THE ONLY WAY TO START--

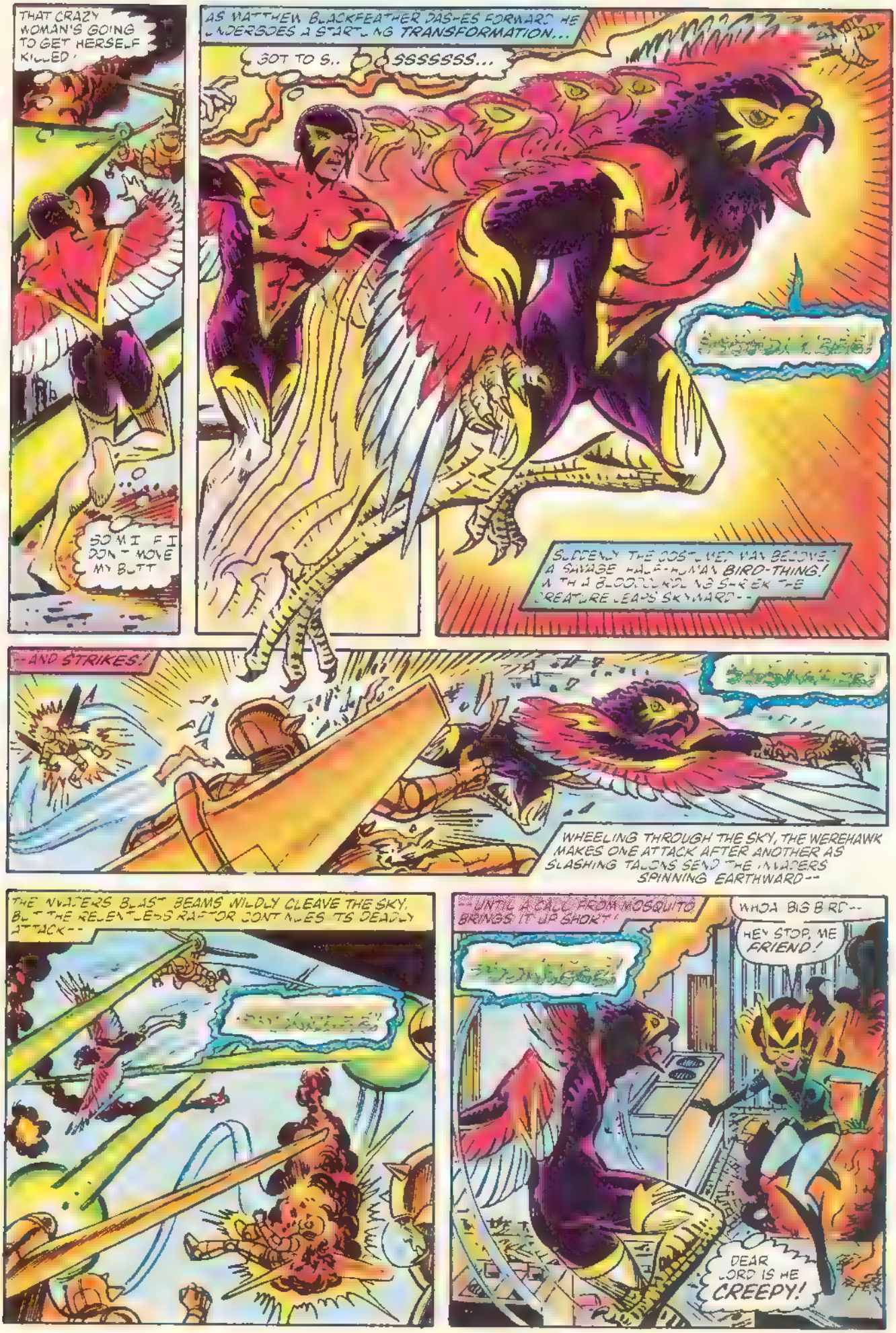

LOOK OUT, FOOL!
-- IS TO JUMP IN HEAD FIRST
BECAUSE IF I STOP TO THINK ABOUT IT--
OUCH!
--I'D PROBABLY BE TOO SCARED TO DO ANYTHING!

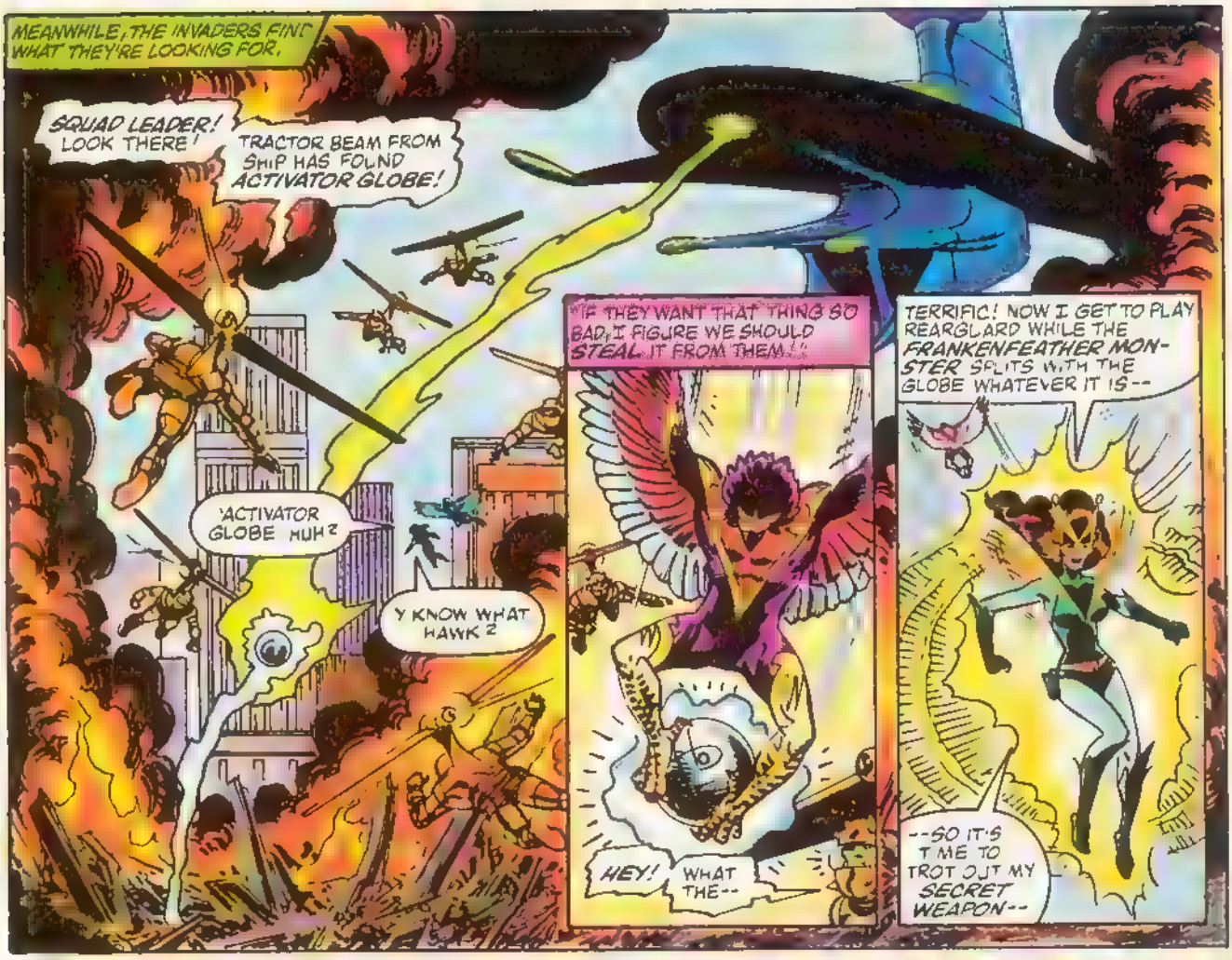

SHOOT IT! SHOOT IT!
WHOOPS!
THESE GUYS REMIND ME OF MY LAST DATE. SIXTEEN HANDS AND ALL GRABBY!
LET'S SEE IF THIS PLASTIC HOG-LEG WILL SLOW THEM DOWN!
ALL RIGHT BOZOS--
THIS IS IT! EAT HOT--
--DARTS

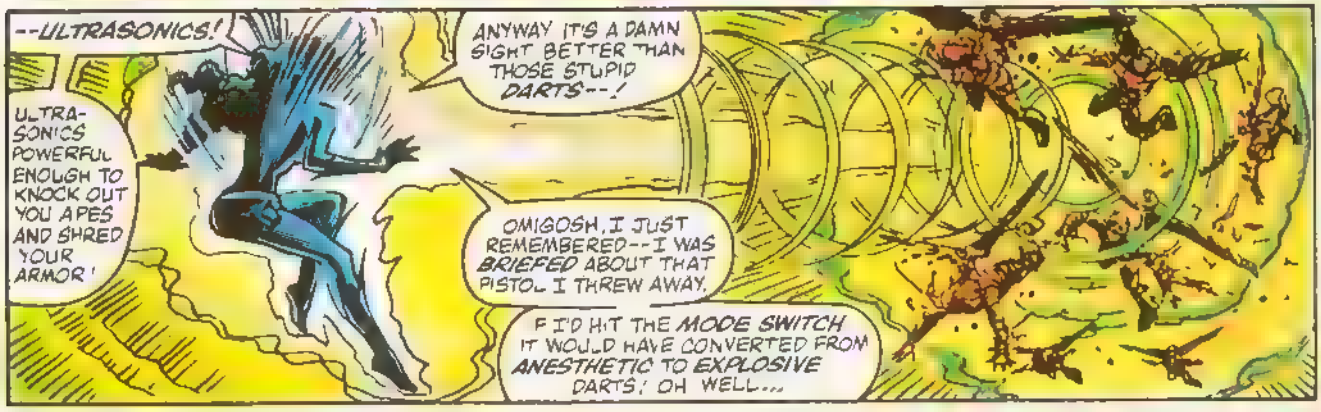
DARTS!?!
THEY SEND ME OUT AGAINST GORILLAS WEARING ARMOR TUXEDOS--
--AND THEY GIVE ME A GUN THAT SHOOTS DARTS!?

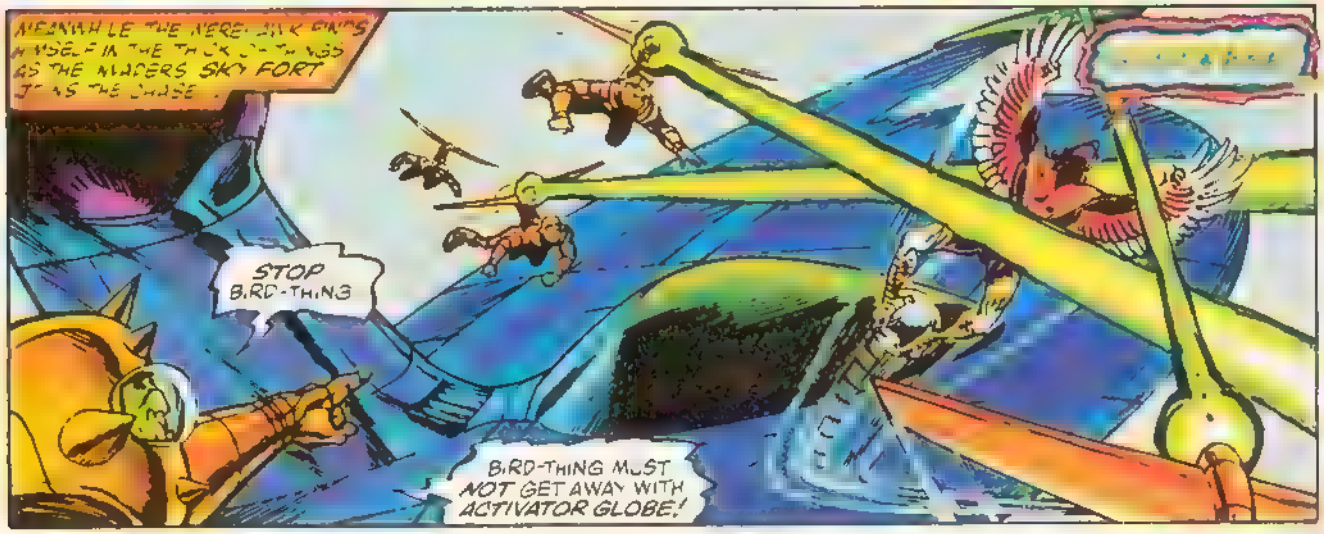
HAR! STUPID TOY GUN CAN'T HURT ANYTHING NOW FLYING GIRL IN BIG TROUBLE!

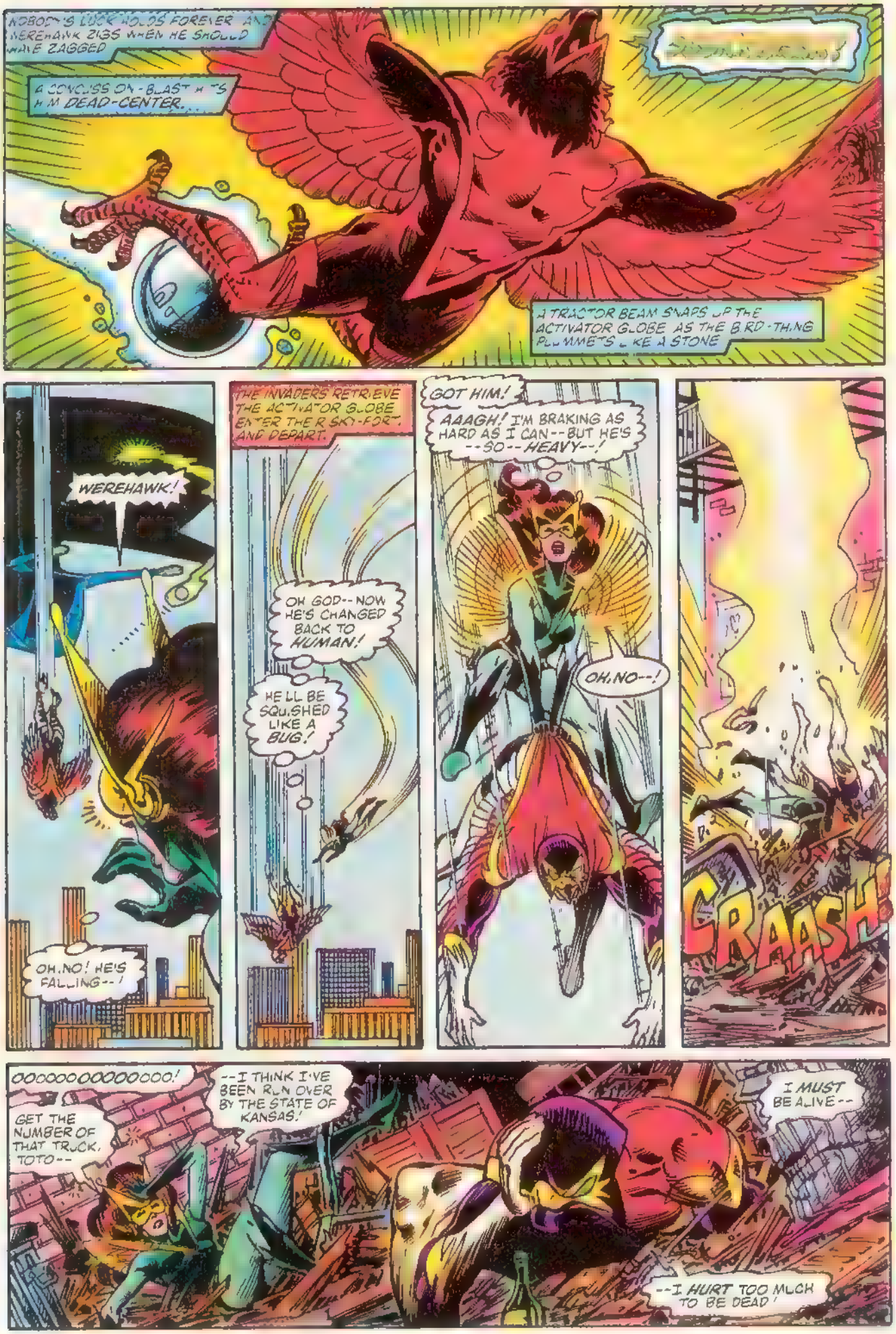

IN YOUR HAT MEGAMOUTH!
ZONK
GYAAACK!


THAT CRAZY WOMAN'S GOING TO GET HERSELF KILLED!
SO MI FI DON'T MOVE MY BUTT
AS MATTHEW BLACKFEATHER DAS-ES FORWARD HE UNDERGOES A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION...
GOT TO S.. SSSSSSS...
SUDDENLY THE COSTUMED MAN BECOMES A SAVAGE HALF-HUMAN BIRD-THING! WITH A BLOODCURDLING SHRIEK THE CREATURE LEAPS SKYWARD--
-AND STRIKES!
WHEELING THROUGH THE SKY, THE WEREHAWK MAKES ONE ATTACK AFTER ANOTHER AS SLASHING TALONS SEND THE INVADERS SPINNING EARTHWARD--
THE INVADERS BLAST BEAMS WILDLY CLEAVE THE SKY, BUT THE RELENTLESS RAPTOR CONTINUES ITS DEADLY ATTACK--
...UNTIL A CALL FROM MOSQUITO BRINGS IT UP SHORT!
WHOA BIG BIRD--
HEY STOP, ME FRIEND!
DEAR LORD IS HE CREEPY!


MEANWHILE, THE INVADERS FIND WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR.
SQUAD LEADER! LOOK THERE!
TRACTOR BEAM FROM SHIP HAS FOUND ACTIVATOR GLOBE!
'ACTIVATOR GLOBE' HUH?
Y KNOW WHAT HAWK?
"IF THEY WANT THAT THING SO BAD, I FIGURE WE SHOULD STEAL IT FROM THEM!"
HEY! WHAT THE--
TERRIFIC! NOW I GET TO PLAY REARGUARD WHILE THE FRANKENFEATHER MONSTER SPLITS WITH THE GLOBE WHATEVER IT IS--
--SO IT'S TIME TO TROT OUT MY SECRET WEAPON--


--ULTRASONICS!
ULTRA-SONICS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO KNOCK OUT YOU APES AND SHRED YOUR ARMOR!
ANYWAY IT'S A DAMN SIGHT BETTER THAN THOSE STUPID DARTS--!
OMIGOSH, I JUST REMEMBERED--I WAS BRIEFED ABOUT THAT PISTOL I THREW AWAY.
IF I'D HIT THE MODE SWITCH IT WOULD HAVE CONVERTED FROM ANESTHETIC TO EXPLOSIVE DARTS! OH WELL...


MEANWHILE THE NEREIDIAN FINDS HIMSELF IN THE THICK OF THE BATTLE AS THE INVADERS SKY FORT JOINS THE CHASE.
STOP BIRD-THING
BIRD-THING MUST NOT GET AWAY WITH ACTIVATOR GLOBE!


NOBODY'S LUCK HOLDS FOREVER AND WEREHAWK ZIGS WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE ZAGGED
A CONCUSS ON-BLAST HITS HIM DEAD-CENTER...
A TRACTOR BEAM SNAPS UP THE ACTIVATOR GLOBE AS THE BIRD-THING PLUMMETS LIKE A STONE
WEREHAWK!
OH,NO! HE'S FALLING--!
THE INVADERS RETRIEVE THE ACTIVATOR GLOBE ENTER THEIR SKY-FORT, AND DEPART.
OH GOD--NOW HE'S CHANGED BACK TO HUMAN!
HE'LL BE SQUISHED LIKE A BUG!
GOT HIM!
AAAGH! I'M BRAKING AS HARD AS I CAN--BUT HE'S --SO--HEAVY--!
OH,NO--!
CRAASH!
OOOOOOOOOOOOO!
GET THE NUMBER OF THAT TRUCK, TOTO--
--I THINK I'VE BEEN RUN OVER BY THE STATE OF KANSAS!
I MUST BE ALIVE--
--I HURT TOO MUCH TO BE DEAD!

SOME RESCUE-- YOU NEARLY GOT US BOTH KILLED!
--DON'T DO ME ANY MORE FAVORS!
DO ME A FAVOR--
WHAAAT?!
YOU UNGRATEFUL SONOVA--
I SAVED YOUR USELESS LIFE, YOU BIGMOUTH FEATHERBRAIN
CAN I HELP IT IF THEY GAVE ME TINY LITTLE BUG-WINGS?!
TAKE IT EASY--
YOU... YOU... TURKEY!!
DEAR LORD IN HEAVEN
I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER WOMAN--
--THERE MAY BE PEOPLE OUT IN THE RUBBLE WE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP
COME ON
NO!! YOU CANNOT BE OF ANY USE THERE
RETURN!!
WHAT--?
IT'S VANDERVECKEN!
BUT-- AAARGH!
NO! RETURN!
EEEEE
RETURN!
RETURN!
RETURN!
POP

SUNSWIFT AND SILVER SHADOW
BLACK MOUNTAIN MILITARY ARSENAL: HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THE GREAT SOUTHWEST THIS SPRAWLING FACILITY STORES A TERRIFYING MEGATONNAGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS WARHEADS, AND WEAPON-GRADE URANIUM.
A TRIBUTE TO THE CONCEPT OF ATOMIC OVERKILL... THIS ONE PLACE HAS ENOUGH NUCLEAR DEATH STORED AWAY TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE PLANET--NOT ONCE, BUT SEVERAL DOZEN TIMES.
THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS AND THEIR WAR MACHINES SURROUND AND GUARD THIS DEADLY TREASURE AND KEEP IT SAFELY CONTAINED--
--BUT NOT TODAY
A BIZARRE MENACE HAS COME ROARING OUT OF THE DESERT! A WRITHING MASS OF CORRUSCATING ENERGY PIERCED BY A DEVASTATING VORTEX THAT SWALLOWS UP EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH!
TANK FIRE DOESN'T STOP IT!
LOOK OUT! IT'S RIPPING INTO THE BOMB DEPOSITORY!
RUN!
SUNSWIFT AND SILVER SHADOW APPEAR IN THE MIDST OF PANDEMONIUM!
BY THE GREAT ORB--!
GOOD LORD--IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!
THAT GIANT VORTEX IS SWEEPING AWAY ALL THE STORED NUCLEAR WEAPONS!
BUT WHERE ARE THEY GOING? THAT ENERGY CLOUD ISN'T SOLID--LOOK THE TANK SHELLS PASS RIGHT THROUGH!

SUDDENLY...
LOOK OUT!!
KZAAK!!
BY THE STARS--
WE ARE TOO EXPOSED HERE. THAT PLASMA BOLT WAS DANGEROUSLY CLOSE.
YOU MUST FIND COVER WHILE I SEE WHAT I CAN DO AGAINST TH S STRANGE MANIFESTATION.
BLT--HEY!
KLAAK
WHAT M I SUPPOSED TO DO DOWN HE--
YEEOW!!
RIGHT. GOOD-BYE--
AS THE SEARING PLASMA BOLT SLAGS THE NEARBY CONCRETE WALL THE MAN IN BLACK-AND-SILVER STEPS INTO A SHADOW--
--AND IS SUDDENLY SOMEWHERE ELSE.
IT'S NOT EXACTLY TELEPORTATION, AND NOT EXACTLY MAGIC. SENSING SHADOWS AS A TENUOUS SORT OF OTHER-DIMENSIONAL PATHWAY, THE TALL ALBINO SLIPS FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER AS SILENTLY AS A PHANTOM.
MEANWHILE HIGH ABOVE SUNSWIFT LAUNCHES A BLAZING ATTACK...
THIS ENERGY MANIFESTATION AND ACCOMPANYING VORTEX, ARE NOT NATURAL PHENOMENA. SOME AGENCY IS GENERAT NG THIS EFFECT AND COLLECTING THE NUCLEAR DEVICES.
IT MUST BE CONCEALED WITH N THE ENERGY CLOUD.
BOLT AFTER FIERY BOLT FAILS TO DISCOVER WHAT SHE SEEKS THEN--
GODS ABOVE!
KZZZZZZ
I CANNOT SEE THE ENEMY-- BUT HE CAN CERTAINLY SEE ME!

ELSEWHERE, SILVER SHADOW SHIFTS OUT OF A QUIET PATCH OF GLOOM, INTO TROUBLE.
HEY! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
WHOOPS!
UH--
HOLY CROW!
F'PETE'S SAKE CORP THAT GUY CAME OUTTA THE WALL!
NOT OUT OF THE WALL SOLDIER--OUT OF THE SHADOW!
SCUSE ME--
--AND A NEARBY SHADOW.
--AND THEN TO ANOTHER ONE OUT OF SIGHT AND AROUND THE CORNER...
WHERE'D HE GO?
THE GUY'S A FREAKIN SPOOK!
SO MUCH FOR MILITARY MANEUVERS. NOW TO FIND SUNSWEPT--
--AS IF SHE NEEDED ANY HELP FROM ME!
BUT EVEN AS SILVER SHADOW REACHES THE ROOFTOP--
KLAAAK
AAAAII!
ANOTHER PLASMA BOLT--
OH NO! SHE'S BEEN HIT!
SUNSWEPT! DON'T FALL WOMAN--REACH FOR MY HAND!
NO! STAY BACK! I'LL BE ALL RIGHT!
I AM A CREATURE OF THE SUN. MY TOUCH WOULD SEAR YOUR FLESH!
CONTACT WITH YOU OR ANY PHYSICAL OBJECT ON THIS WORLD WOULD CHILL ME AND DRAIN MY ENERGIES FURTHER
I AM QUITE RECOVERED NOW--

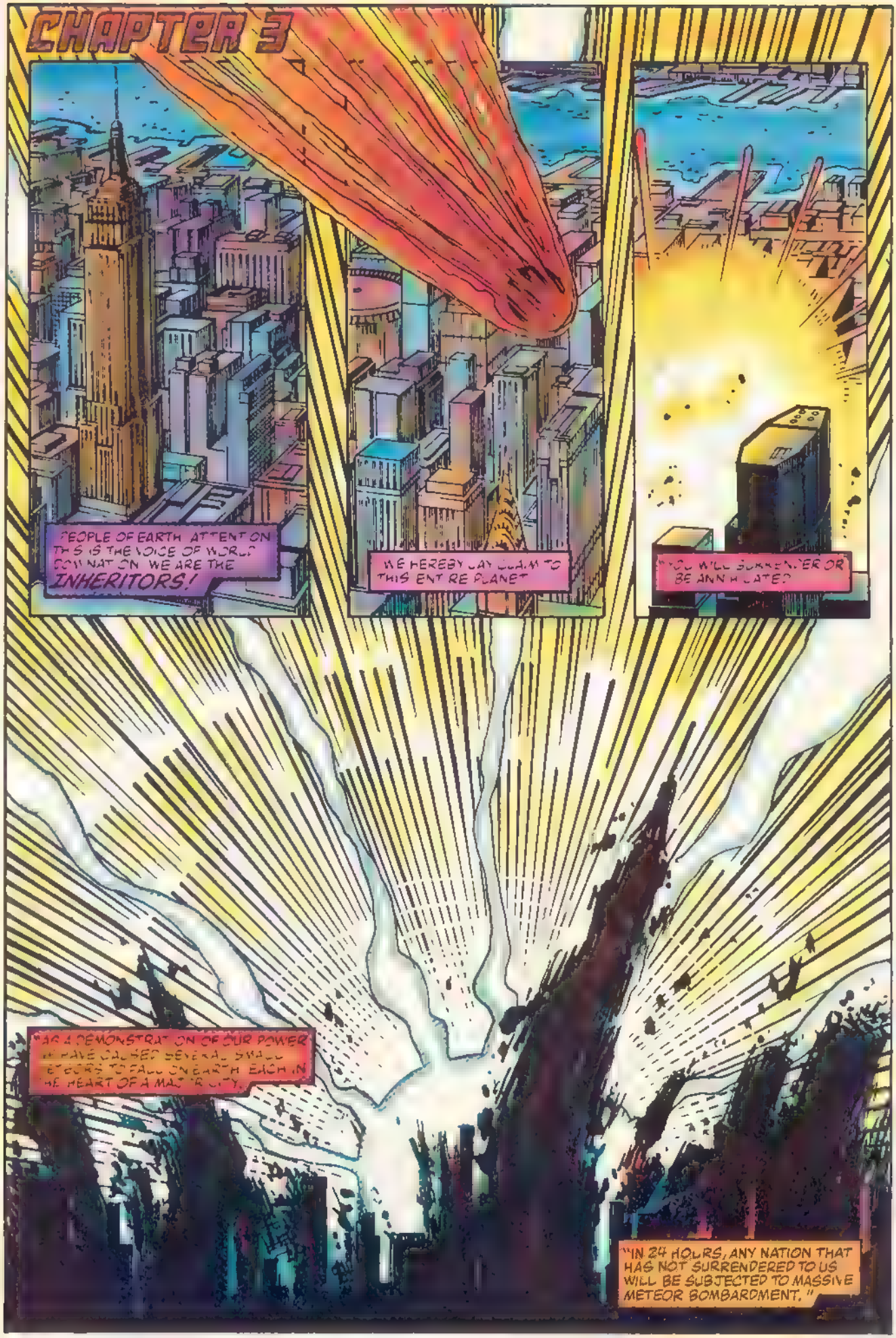
--AND I SHALL BE MORE CAREFUL IN AVOIDING THOSE PLASMA BOLTS IN FUTURE!
BUT-- WAIT!
DOES THAT MEAN THAT YOU'RE CUT OFF FROM ALL PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH OTHER PEOPLE--
--PERMANENTLY--?
MY GOD!
IF THE FLAME-HAIRED WOMAN HEARS HIM AT ALL SHE CHOOSES TO IGNORE HIM. HURTLING SKYWARD ONCE MORE SHE FIGHTS ON WITH RENEWED FURY.
VAAAK
IF SHE IS DRIVEN BY INNER DEMONS, THEY ARE KNOWN ONLY TO HERSELF.
WHILE BELOW...
THERE! IN THAT COURTYARD! THERE'S A HAZY SHADOW OF SOME GREAT MACHINE!
IT'S ONLY VISIBLE WHEN SUNSWIFT FIRES ONE OF HER BLASTS!
SILVER SHADOW APPRISES SUNSWIFT OF HIS DISCOVERY...
WHAT YOU DESCRIBE SOUNDS FAMILIAR. THERE MUST BE A WAR MACHINE WITHIN THE ENERGY CLOUD WHICH IS DIMENSIONALLY OUT OF PHASE WITH 'HERE-AND-NOW.'
THE INTENSITY OF MY LIGHT REVEALS IT BUT, MY STAR-BOLTS CANNOT TOUCH IT.
OUT OF PHASE, HM?
INFILTRATION'S MY STRONG SUIT; NOT PHYSICS-- BUT MAYBE I CAN USE THE SHADOW OF THE THING AS A GATEWAY INTO THE THING.
IT MAY BE RISKY, AND IT PROBABLY WON'T WORK ANYWAY--BUT I'LL NEED A GOOD, STRONG SHADOW. CAN YOU DO IT?
OF COURSE
STAND READY.
GO GET 'EM LADY!

SILVER SHADOW SHIFTS TO GROUND-LEVEL WHILE--
--HIGH OVERHEAD SUNSHAFT BLAZES INCANDESCENT WITH SOLAR FURY.
BOLT AFTER BOLT OF SEARING FLAME LANCES INTO THE SEETHING ENERGY-MASS TO BE COMPLETELY ABSORBED.
ON THE GROUND BENEATH THE BLAZING CLOUD, A SHADOW TAKES FORM--
--AND SILVER SHADOW REACHES TO FEEL FOR A GATEWAY INTO THE INTANGIBLE MACHINE
HE FINDS IT
THEN HE SCREAMS.
YAAAAA!
TRYING TO PHASE FROM SHADOW TO MACHINE ACROSS DIMENSIONAL BOUNDARIES, SILVER SHADOW FEELS HIS BODY BEING TORN IN DOZENS OF DIRECTIONS AT ONCE!
HE PRESSES ON--
HE SCREAMS AGAIN!
HE'S BEING RIPPED APART!
THEN, SUDDENLY, IT'S OVER AND HE FINDS HIMSELF--ELSEWHERE
WHOOF -- I DON'T THINK I EVER WANT TO DO THAT AGAIN
HMM. I SMELL OIL, HOT METAL, ELECTRICAL WIRING AND DIRTY SOCKS. I MUST'VE MADE IT AFTER ALL.

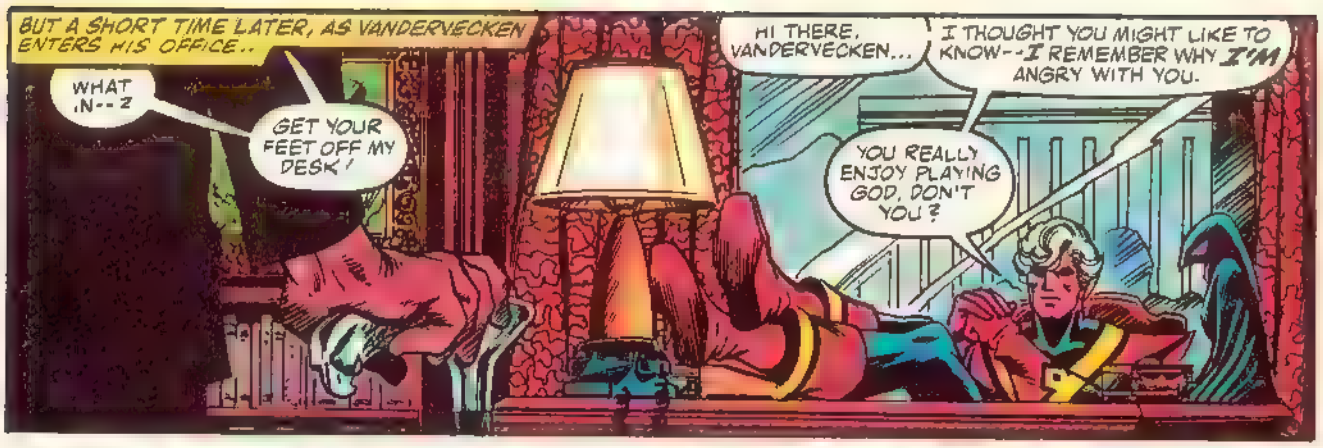
YES INDEED! BIG CONTROL ROOM LOTS OF ARMORED THUGS--LOOKS LIKE WE WERE RIGHT ON THE MARK!
LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO BUST THIS UP.
ATTEND BALANCE COMPENSATION. LOAD SHIFT TO STARBOARD.
RMS PHASE TWO --REVERSE THREE ACTIVATE.
SUDDENLY THE RAIDERS ARE STARTLED TO DISCOVER A HUGE SHADOWY THING LOOMING OVER THEM!
ALL HANDS--REPEL INVADER!
NYA-HA-HAAA WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS?
GREAT GUU!
YIIIII! CAPTAIN!
SHOOT IT! SHOOT IT!
SHOOT WHERE? IS ONLY SHADOW!
FIRE, YOU FOOLS--BLAST IT!
YIIIII! THE SHADOWS--!
IS IMPOSSIBLE!
THE SHADOWS ARE COMING OFF THE WALLS!

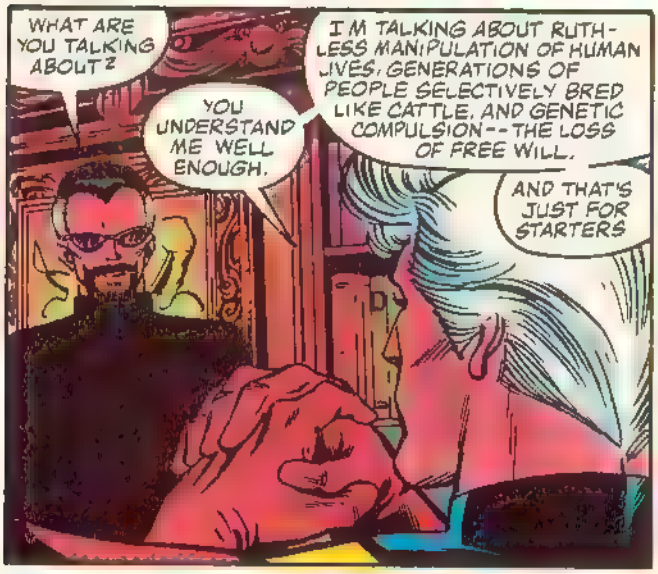
GYAAARG!
POW!
THE SHADOWS AREN'T THE ONLY THINGS THAT ARE OFF-THE-WALL, BUDDY!
RETRIEVING THE FALLEN WEAPON SILVER SHADOW ARMS AND...
SSHAAAK!
SINCE I DON'T KNOW WHICH CONTROLS WILL SHUT THIS THING DOWN--
--I'LL JUST BLOW HOLES IN EVERYTHING!
A RATHER CRUDE TACTIC BUT IT WORKS...
FOR SUDDENLY THE ENERGY CLOUD THINS THE AIR SHIMMERS--
--AND THE ENEMY STANDS REVEALED
A TRIPOD MACHINE!
IF I DEPRIVE IT OF ITS FOOTING--
--THAT SHOULD BRING IT DOWN!
VRAAM

KROOM!
WITH A SCREECH OF TEARING METAL THE BEHEMOTH RISES AS THE GATHERING SILENCE IS SWEPT BY SEARCHLIGHTS OVER THE TWISTED WRECKAGE.
SILVER SHADOW WHERE ARE YOU?
SHADOW! SILVER SHADOW!
OVER HERE LADY
I SHIFTED OUT WHEN THE MACHINE RETURNED TO 'HERE-AND-NOW'.
YOU BUSTED IT UP PRETTY GOOD, LADY.
I BELIEVE WE ARE FINISHED HERE I WILL SEE YOU BACK AT FUTURE DYNAMICS
RIGHT CATCH YOU LATER
I KNOW I GOTTA BE GOIN NUTS THIS CRAZY MACHINE APPEARS OUTTA NOWHERE-- THEN THERE'S A FLYIN' DAME WITH HER HEAD ON FIRE AND THEN A GUY GOES THROUGH THE WALL!
THEN WE'RE BOTH NUTS CAPN-- I SAW 'EM TOO
WONDER WHERE I CAN GET THAT FIRE EATER'S PHONE-NUMBER--?

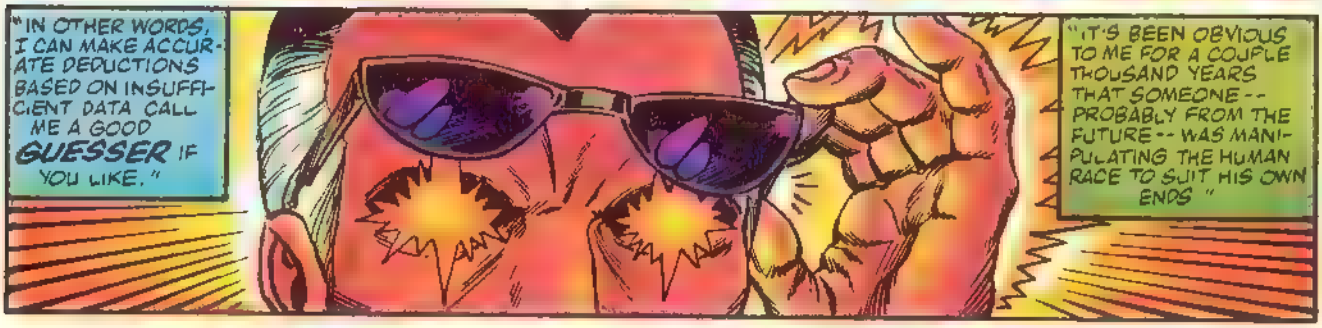

CHAPTER 3
PEOPLE OF EARTH ATTENTION THIS IS THE VOICE OF WORLD DOMINATION. WE ARE THE INHERITORS!
WE HEREBY LAY CLAIM TO THIS ENTIRE PLANET
YOU WILL SURRENDER OR BE ANNIHILATED!
AS A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR POWER WE HAVE CAUSED SEVERAL SMALL METEORS TO FALL ON EARTH EACH IN THE HEART OF A MAJOR CITY.
"IN 24 HOURS, ANY NATION THAT HAS NOT SURRENDERED TO US WILL BE SUBJECTED TO MASSIVE METEOR BOMBARDMENT."

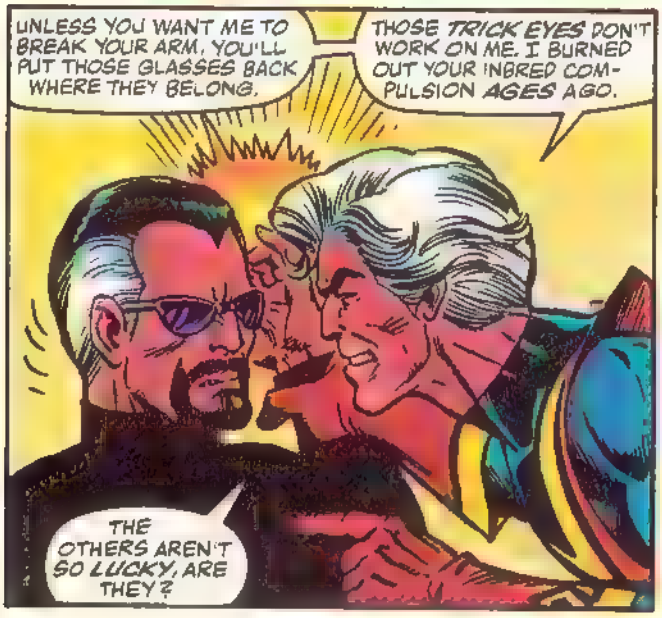
THE INHERITORS ULTIMATUM BLANKETED ALL COMMUNICATIONS WAVELENGTHS WORLD-WIDE. THEY OVERRODE EVERYTHING.
AS YOU CAN SEE THEY ARE NOT BLUFFING. THAT IS MIDTOWN MANHATTAN.
OH, DEAR GOD--!
I ESTIMATE A MINIMUM OF ONE MILLION DEAD PERHAPS TWO! NOT TO MENTION BILLIONS IN PROPERTY LOSS.
IN ADDITION TO NEW YORK THEY HAVE HIT A DOZEN OTHER CITIES--LONDON, PARIS MOSCOW BEIJING --AT LEAST ONE MAJOR CITY ON EACH CONTINENT.
THE SUPERPOWERS ARE ON FULL MISSILE ALERT--EACH HALF SUSPECTS THAT ONE OF THE OTHERS IS RESPONSIBLE. THIS IS A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION.
A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION--
YOU COLD-BLOODED BASTARD!
I JUST SO HAPPENS I'VE GOT RELATIVES IN NEW YORK.
ME TOO! MY WHOLE FAMILY'S THERE! WE HAVE TO GO HELP THEM!
NO! GOING THERE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION! YOU MAY USE THE CONFERENCE ROOM PHONES TO TRY CALLING YOUR FAMILIES, THOUGH I DOUBT YOU'LL GET THROUGH.
YOU'RE JUST WASTING YOUR TIME
AREN'T YOU AFRAID THEY'LL USE THEIR TELEPORT GIZMOS AND PHONE THEMSELVES TO NEW YORK?
CERTAINLY NOT. I'VE GOT NULLIFIERS ON ALL OUTGOING LINES.
YEAH, WELL I'M ABOUT TO NULLIFY YOU, JACK--
WE'RE GOING TO SETTLE THINGS RIGHT NOW, ABOUT--AB--ABOUT--
ABOUT WHAT?
ABOUT--UH--
I FORGET.
THIS IS CRAZY! I KNOW I'M ANGRY WITH YOU, VANDERVECKEN. BUT I--I CAN'T REMEMBER WHY!
WELL, MY BOY, IF IT COMES TO YOU--
--DO STOP AROUND TO MY OFFICE AND LET ME KNOW. NOW I MUST START A SEARCH FOR THE INHERITORS BASE OF OPERATIONS. IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

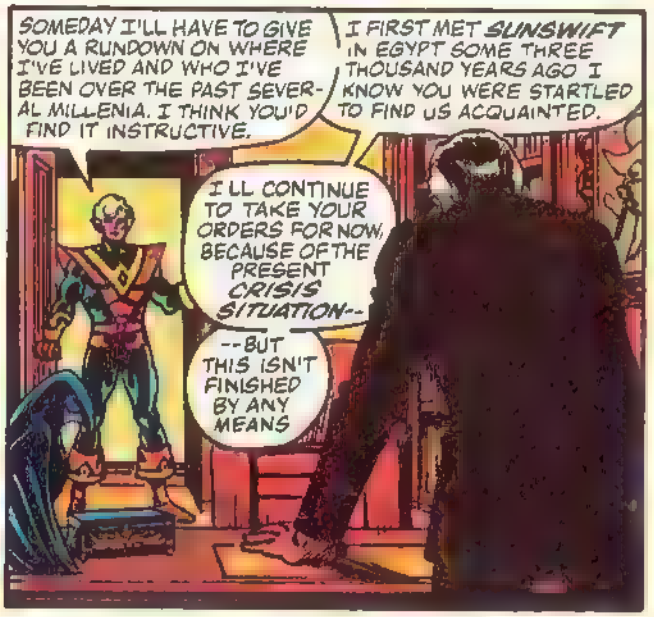

BUT A SHORT TIME LATER, AS VANDERVECKEN ENTERS HIS OFFICE..
WHAT IN--?
GET YOUR FEET OFF MY DESK!
HI THERE, VANDERVECKEN...
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW--I REMEMBER WHY I'M ANGRY WITH YOU.
YOU REALLY ENJOY PLAYING GOD, DON'T YOU?


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU UNDERSTAND ME WELL ENOUGH.
I'M TALKING ABOUT RUTHLESS MANIPULATION OF HUMAN LIVES; GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE SELECTIVELY BRED LIKE CATTLE, AND GENETIC COMPULSION--THE LOSS OF FREE WILL.
AND THAT'S JUST FOR STARTERS

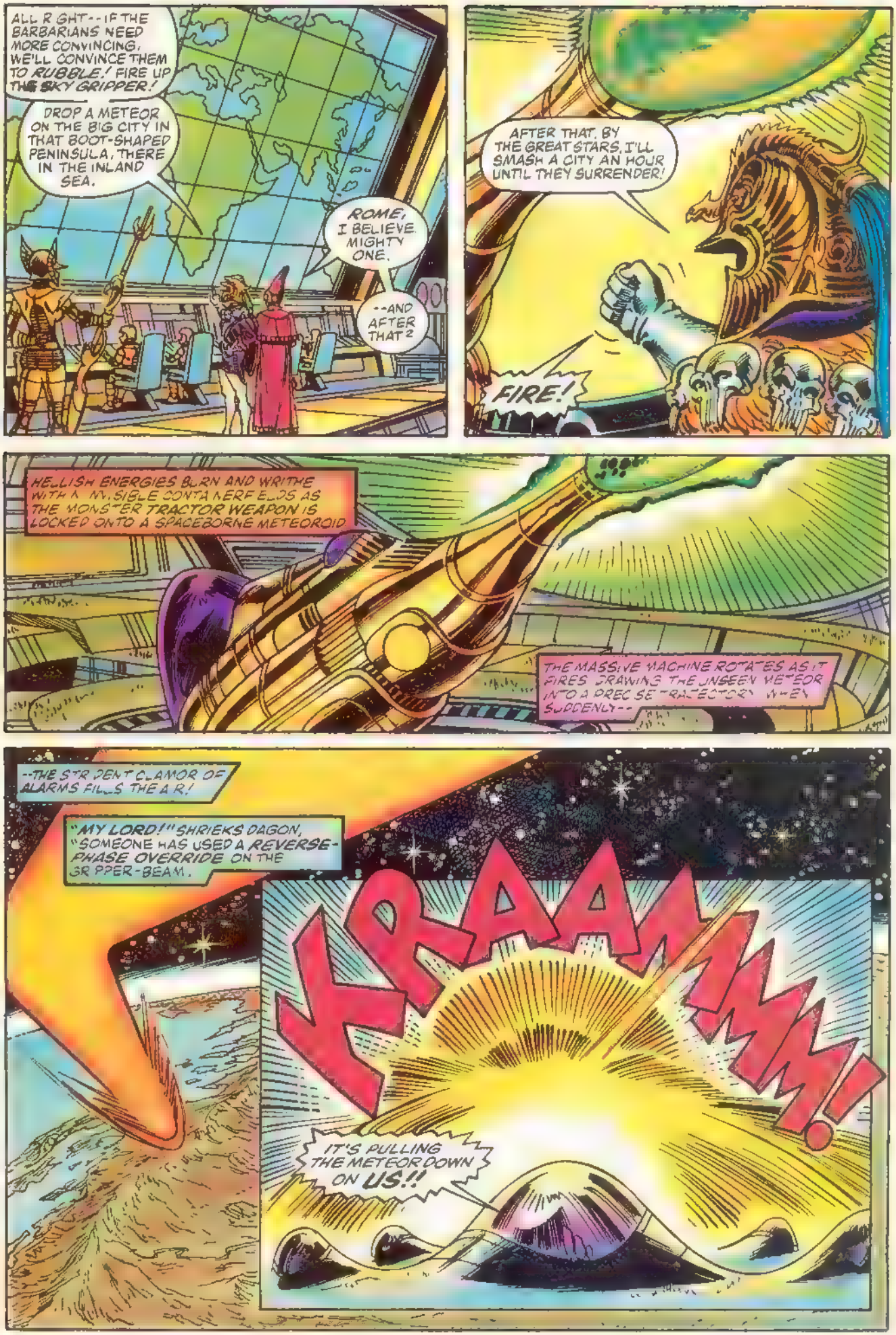
YOU'RE INSANE!
DON'T YOU WISH I WERE!
I'VE BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME, VANDERVECKEN--SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS, IN FACT. YOUR BACKGROUND CHECK DIDN'T TURN THAT UP, DID IT?
AN ABILITY I'VE HAD FOR MOST OF THAT TIME, VANDERVECKEN; IS THE POWER OF INTUITIVE REASONING.

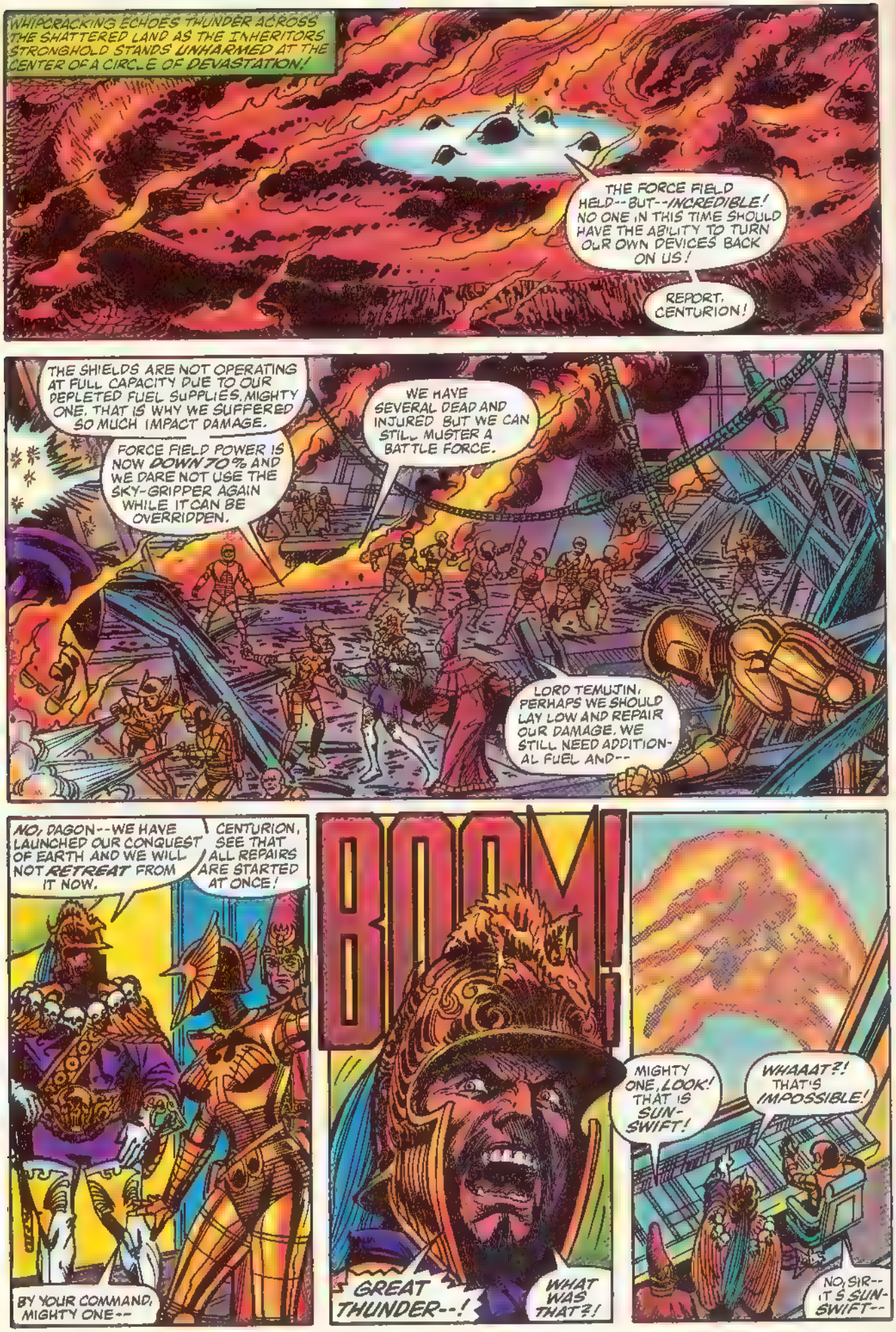

"IN OTHER WORDS, I CAN MAKE ACCURATE DEDUCTIONS BASED ON INSUFFICIENT DATA. CALL ME A GOOD GUESSER IF YOU LIKE."
"IT'S BEEN OBVIOUS TO ME FOR A COUPLE THOUSAND YEARS THAT SOMEONE--PROBABLY FROM THE FUTURE--WAS MANIPULATING THE HUMAN RACE TO SUIT HIS OWN ENDS."


UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO BREAK YOUR ARM, YOU'LL PUT THOSE GLASSES BACK WHERE THEY BELONG.
THOSE TRICK EYES DON'T WORK ON ME. I BURNED OUT YOUR INBRED COMPULSION AGES AGO.
THE OTHERS AREN'T SO LUCKY, ARE THEY?

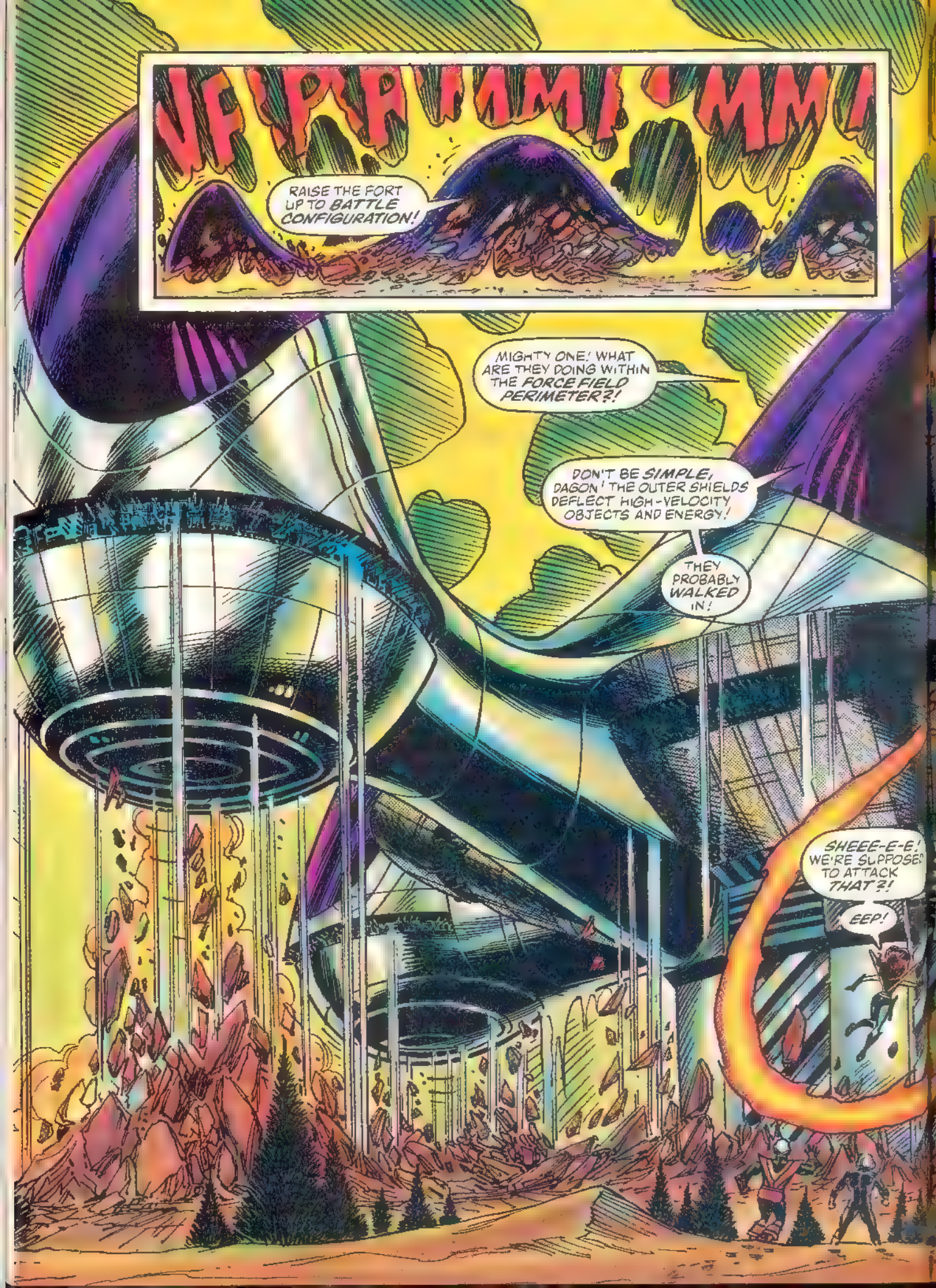

SOMEDAY I'LL HAVE TO GIVE YOU A RUNDOWN ON WHERE I'VE LIVED AND WHO I'VE BEEN OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MILLENIA. I THINK YOU'D FIND IT INSTRUCTIVE.
I FIRST MET SUNSWIFT IN EGYPT SOME THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO. I KNOW YOU WERE STARTLED TO FIND US ACQUAINTED.
I'LL CONTINUE TO TAKE YOUR ORDERS FOR NOW, BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT CRISIS SITUATION--
--BUT THIS ISN'T FINISHED BY ANY MEANS

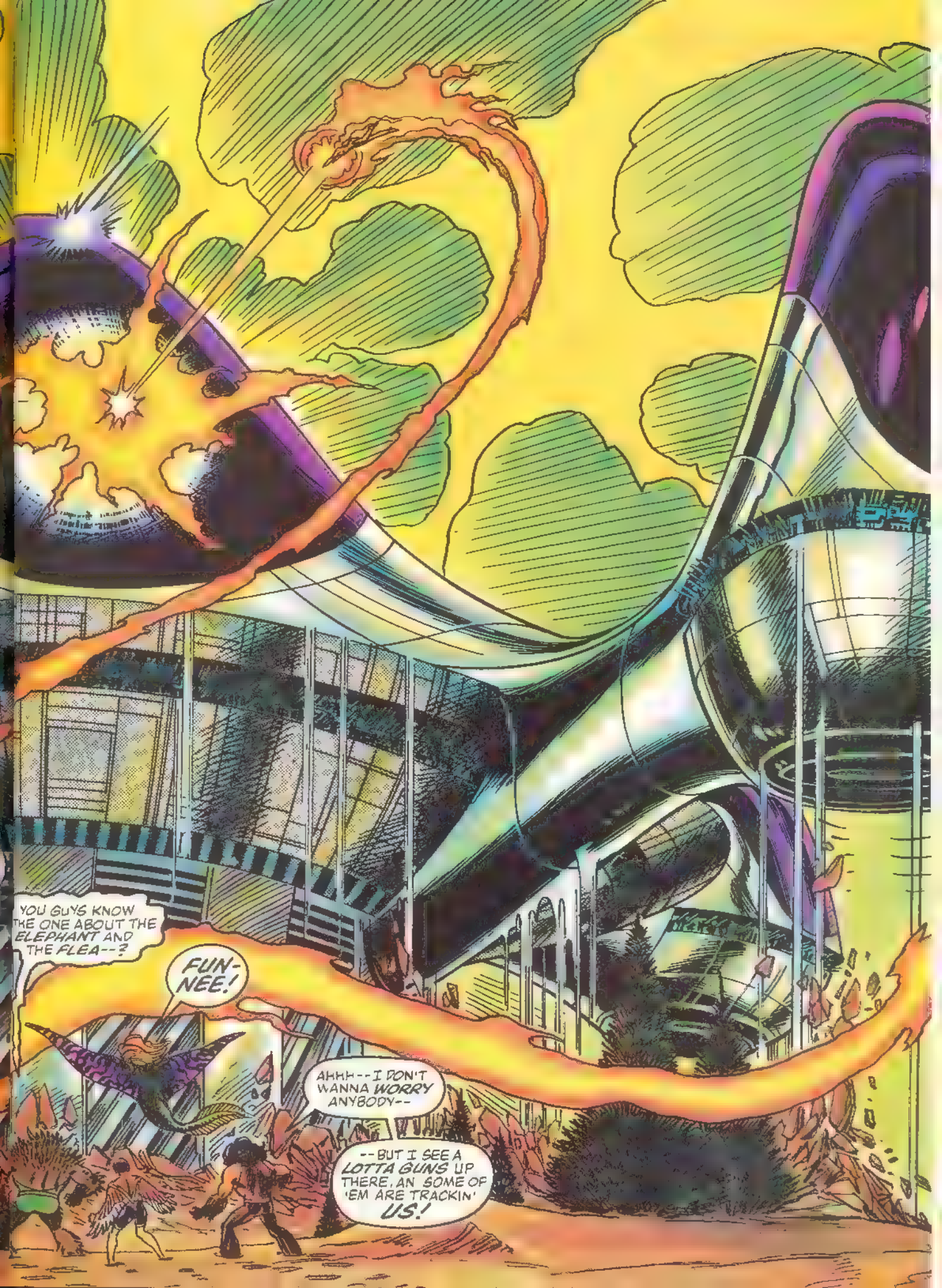
WELL DAGON, HAVE WE RECEIVED ANY SURRENDER CALLS YET?
NO MY LORD TEMUJIN--
IT APPEARS THAT THESE BARBARIC NATIONS DO NOT BELIEVE WE WOULD REALLY CARRY OUT OUR THREAT IN SPITE OF OUR PREVIOUS DEMONSTRATION
WE MAY HAVE TO DROP A FEW MORE OF OUR TRINKETS ON THEM
THAT WOULD NOT SURPRISE ME IN THE LEAST FROM THE VERY START THIS OPERATION HAS BEEN ACCURSED!
WE ABANDONED OUR OWN TIME BECAUSE OUR EFFORTS BACKFIRED--
--THEN, PHASING INTO THIS TIME PERIOD WE SUFFERED A BLANKOUT IN OUR TRANS TEMPORAL SYNCHROLINK
WE LOWER FARTS AN FEEL ALL ACROSS THE NORTH AN THE ACTIVATOR GLOBE WITH OUT WHICH THE SKYGRIPPER OUR MAIN WEAPON IS USELESS FELL TO EARTH AND WAS LOST. LEFT TO SPECULATE BY THE CAVEMEN WHO FOUND
--AND AT LEAST ONE OF OUR RAIDING PARTIES HAS FAILED TO RETURN

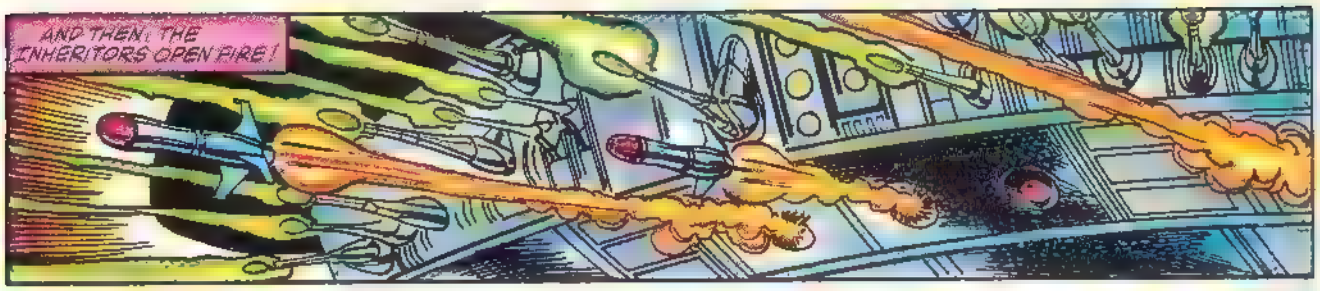

ALL R GHT--IF THE BARBARIANS NEED MORE CONVINCING, WE'LL CONVINCE THEM TO RUBBLE! FIRE UP THE SKY GRIPPER!
DROP A METEOR ON THE BIG CITY IN THAT BOOT-SHAPED PENINSULA, THERE IN THE INLAND SEA.
ROME, I BELIEVE MIGHTY ONE.
--AND AFTER THAT?
AFTER THAT, BY THE GREAT STARS, I'LL SMASH A CITY AN HOUR UNTIL THEY SURRENDER!
FIRE!
HELLISH ENERGIES BURN AND WRITHE WITH A NVISIBLE CONTAINERFIELDS AS THE MONSTER TRACTOR WEAPON IS LOCKED ONTO A SPACEBORNE METEOROID
THE MASSIVE MACHINE ROTATES AS IT FIRES DRAWING THE UNSEEN METEOR INTO A PRECISE TRAJECTORY WHEN SUDDENLY--
--THE STRIDENT CLAMOR OF ALARMS FILLS THE AIR!
"MY LORD!" SHRIEKS DAGON, "SOMEONE HAS USED A REVERSE-PHASE OVERRIDE ON THE GRIPPER-BEAM.
KRAAAMM!!
IT'S PULLING THE METEOR DOWN ON US!!

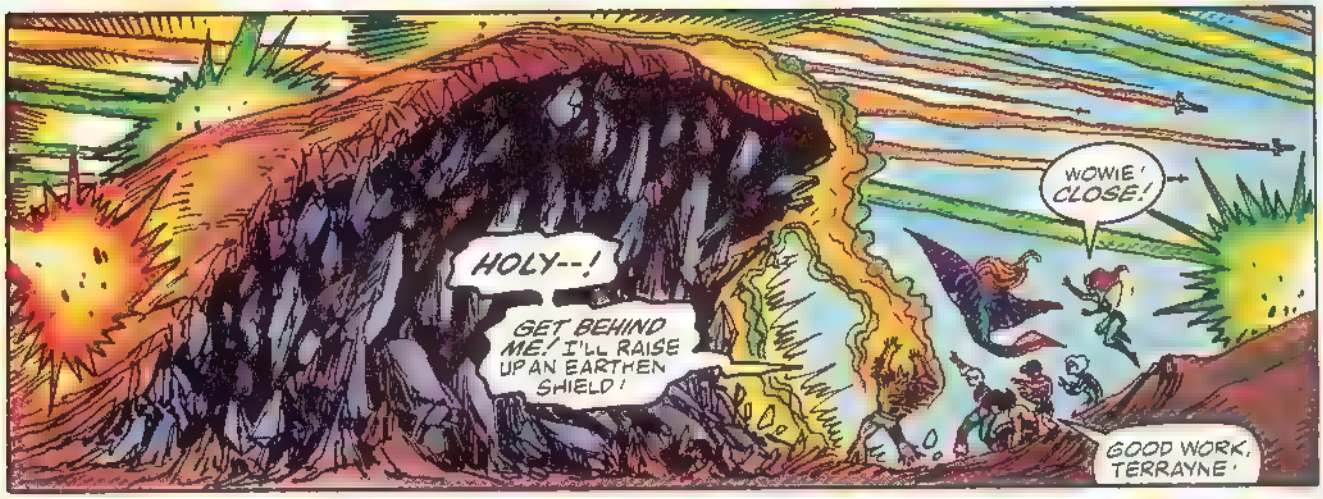

WHIPCRACKING ECHOES THUNDER ACROSS THE SHATTERED LAND AS THE INHERITORS STRONGHOLD STANDS UNHARMED AT THE CENTER OF A CIRCLE OF DEVASTATION!
THE FORCE FIELD HELD--BUT--INCREDIBLE! NO ONE IN THIS TIME SHOULD HAVE THE ABILITY TO TURN OUR OWN DEVICES BACK ON US!
REPORT, CENTURION!
THE SHIELDS ARE NOT OPERATING AT FULL CAPACITY DUE TO OUR DEPLETED FUEL SUPPLIES, MIGHTY ONE. THAT IS WHY WE SUFFERED SO MUCH IMPACT DAMAGE.
FORCE FIELD POWER IS NOW DOWN 70% AND WE DARE NOT USE THE SKY-GRIPPER AGAIN WHILE IT CAN BE OVERRIDDEN.
WE HAVE SEVERAL DEAD AND INJURED BUT WE CAN STILL MUSTER A BATTLE FORCE.
LORD TEMUJIN, PERHAPS WE SHOULD LAY LOW AND REPAIR OUR DAMAGE. WE STILL NEED ADDITIONAL FUEL AND--
NO, DAGON--WE HAVE LAUNCHED OUR CONQUEST OF EARTH AND WE WILL NOT RETREAT FROM IT NOW.
CENTURION, SEE THAT ALL REPAIRS ARE STARTED AT ONCE!
BY YOUR COMMAND, MIGHTY ONE--
BOOM!
GREAT THUNDER--!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
MIGHTY ONE, LOOK! THAT IS SUN-SWIFT!
WHAAAT?! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
NO, SIR--IT'S SUN-SWIFT--

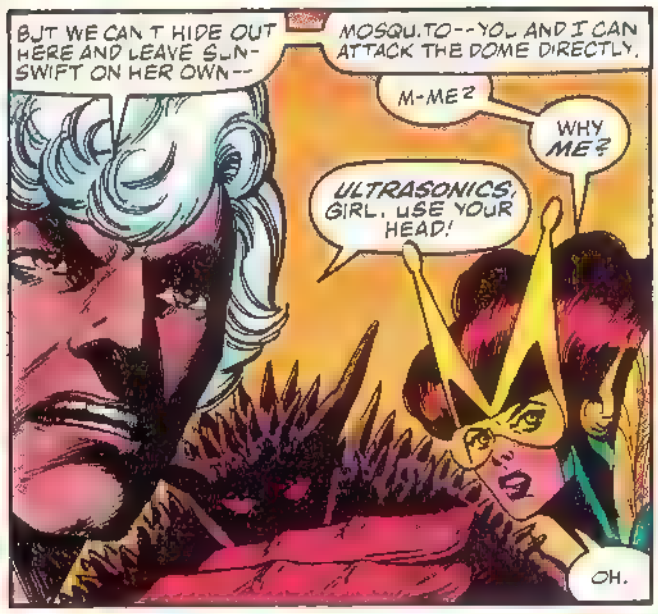
"--AND SHE'S BROUGHT FRIENDS WITH HER!"
BATTLE STATIONS!
STAND BY TO REPEL ATTACK!
I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY MANAGED IT--BUT THIS HAS GOT TO BE THE FUTURIANS DOING!


VRRRAMMMM!
RAISE THE FORT UP TO BATTLE CONFIGURATION!
MIGHTY ONE! WHAT ARE THEY DOING WITHIN THE FORCE FIELD PERIMETER?!
DON'T BE SIMPLE, DAGON! THE OUTER SHIELDS DEFLECT HIGH-VELOCITY OBJECTS AND ENERGY!
THEY PROBABLY WALKED IN!
SHEEE-E-E! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO ATTACK THAT?!
EEP!

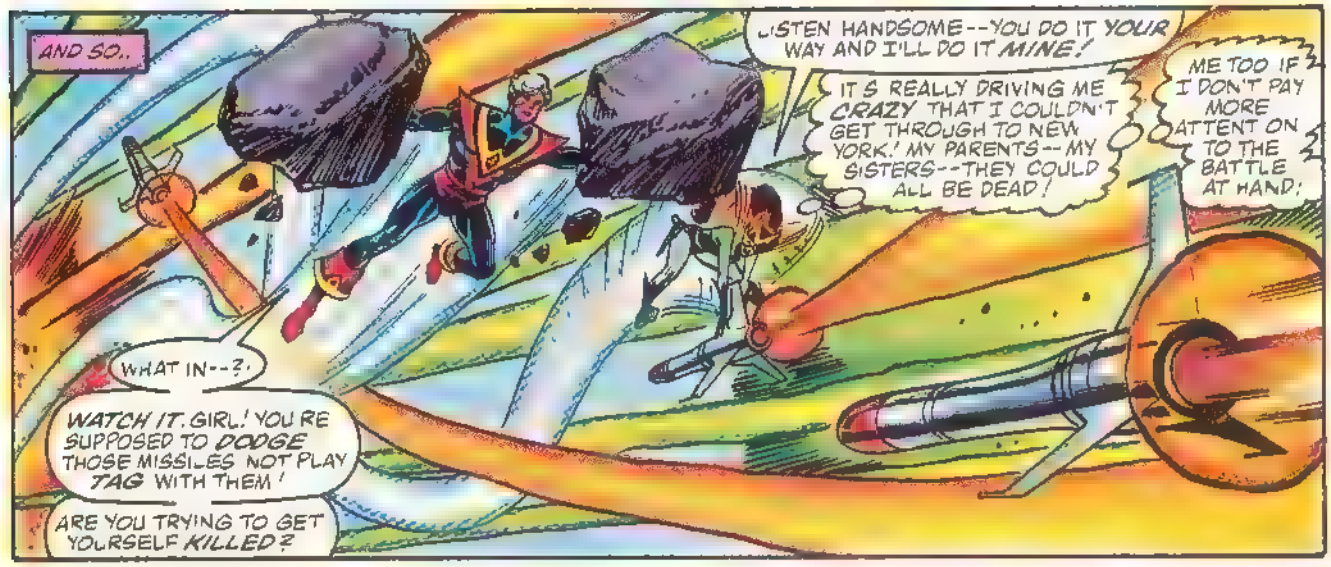

YOU GUYS KNOW THE ONE ABOUT THE ELEPHANT AND THE FLEA--?
FUN-NEE!
AHHH--I DON'T WANNA WORRY ANYBODY--
--BUT I SEE A LOTTA GUNS UP THERE, AN SOME OF 'EM ARE TRACKIN' US!

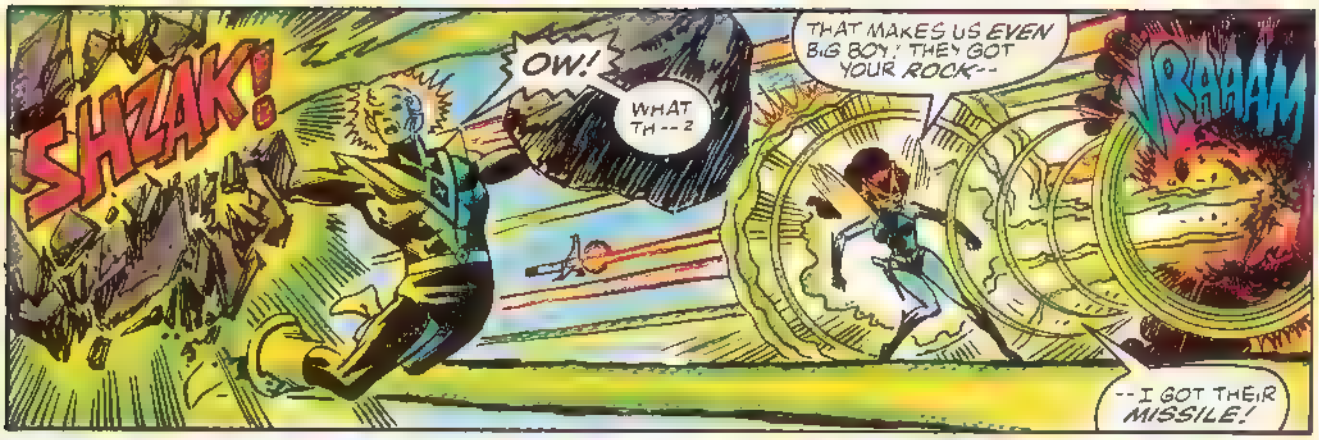

AND THEN, THE INHERITORS OPEN FIRE!

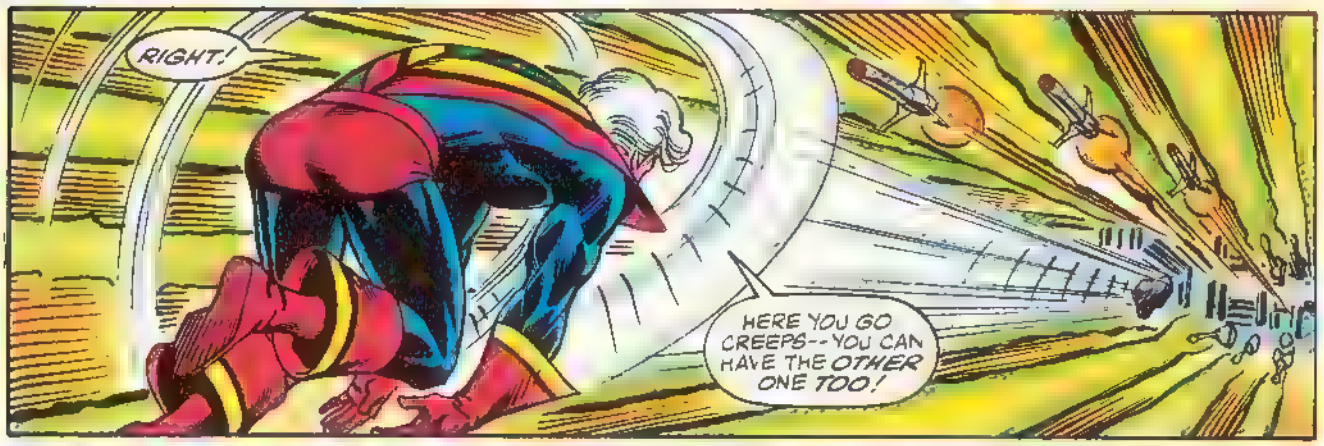

HOLY--!
GET BEHIND ME! I'LL RAISE UP AN EARTHEN SHIELD!
WOWIE! CLOSE!
GOOD WORK, TERRAYNE!

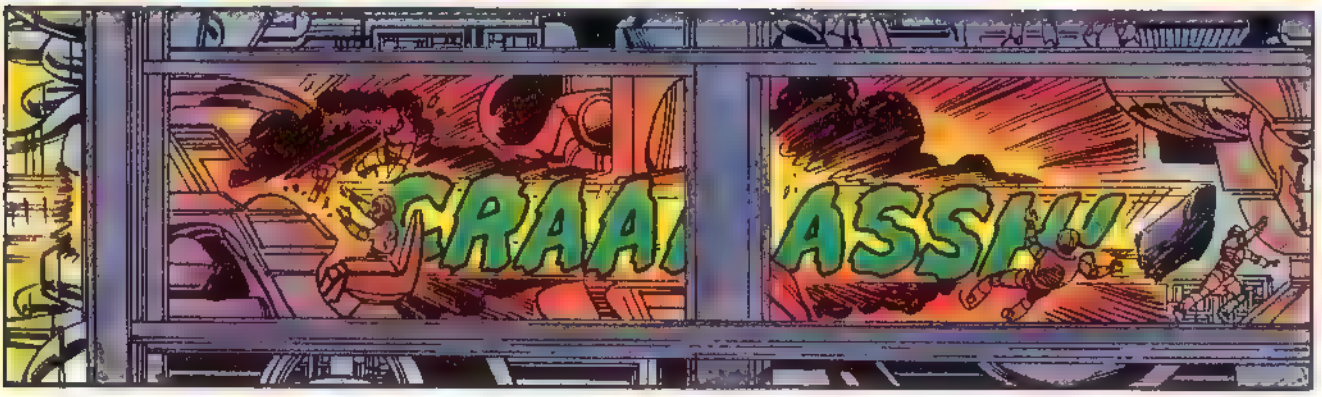

BUT WE CAN'T HIDE OUT HERE AND LEAVE SUN-SWIFT ON HER OWN--
MOSQUITO--YOU AND I CAN ATTACK THE DOME DIRECTLY.
M-ME?
WHY ME?
ULTRASONICS, GIRL. USE YOUR HEAD!
OH.

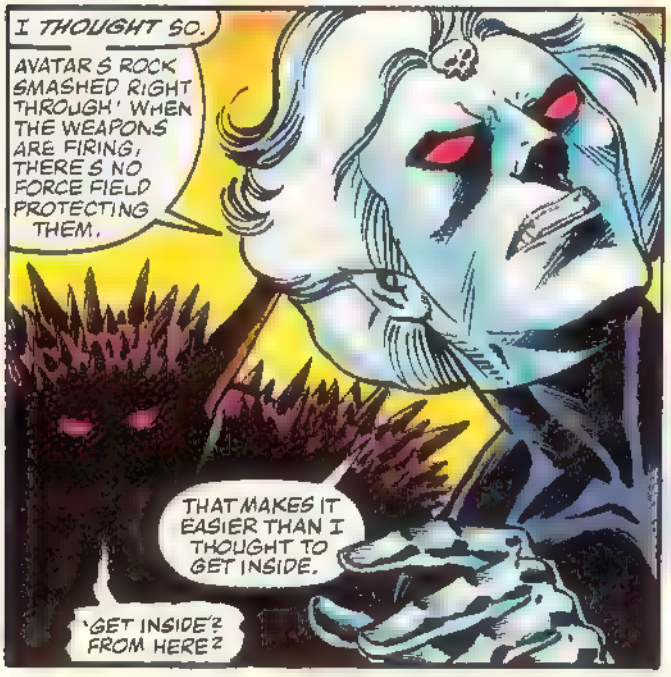
WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US?
YEAH - WHATTA WE DO? THROW ROCKS?
WELL THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO DO--


AND SO..
LISTEN HANDSOME--YOU DO IT YOUR WAY AND I'LL DO IT MINE!
IT'S REALLY DRIVING ME CRAZY THAT I COULDN'T GET THROUGH TO NEW YORK! MY PARENTS--MY SISTERS--THEY COULD ALL BE DEAD!
ME TOO IF I DON'T PAY MORE ATTENT ON TO THE BATTLE AT HAND!
WHAT IN--?
WATCH IT, GIRL! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DODGE THOSE MISSILES NOT PLAY TAG WITH THEM!
ARE YOU TRYING TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?


SHZAK!
OW!
WHAT TH--?
THAT MAKES US EVEN BIG BOY. THEY GOT YOUR ROCK--
VRAAAM
--I GOT THEIR MISSILE!

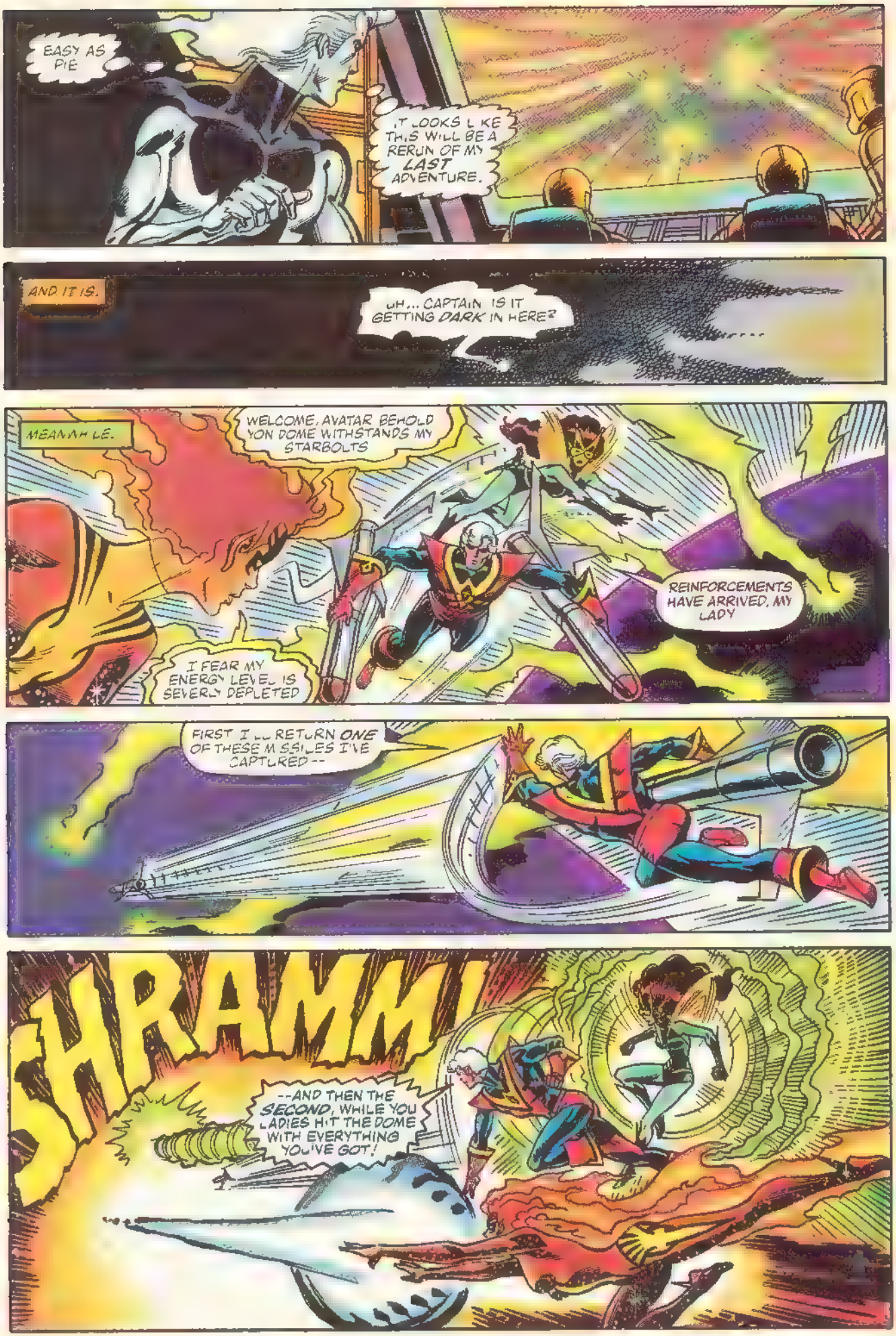

RIGHT!
HERE YOU GO CREEPS--YOU CAN HAVE THE OTHER ONE TOO!

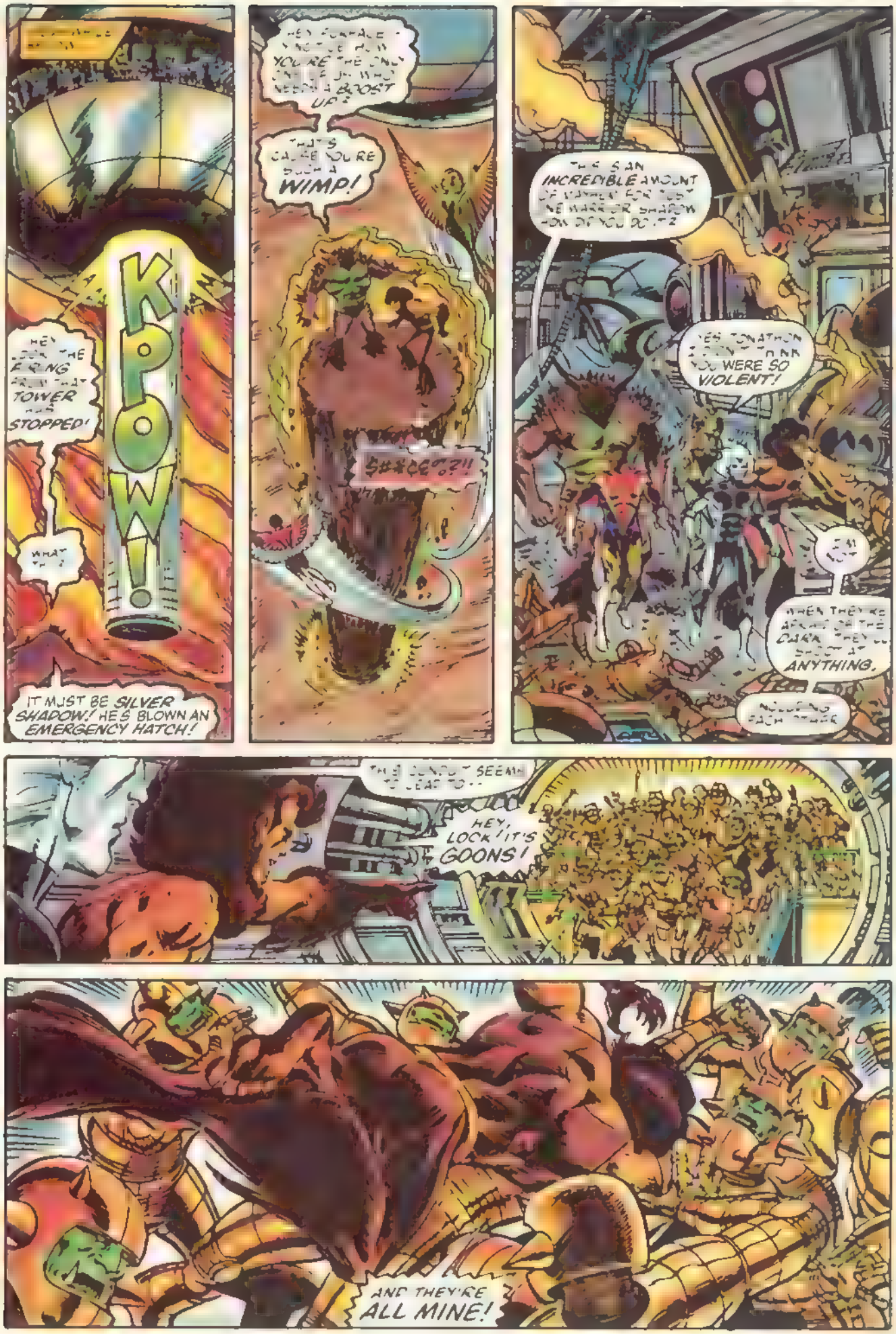

KRAA
ASSA

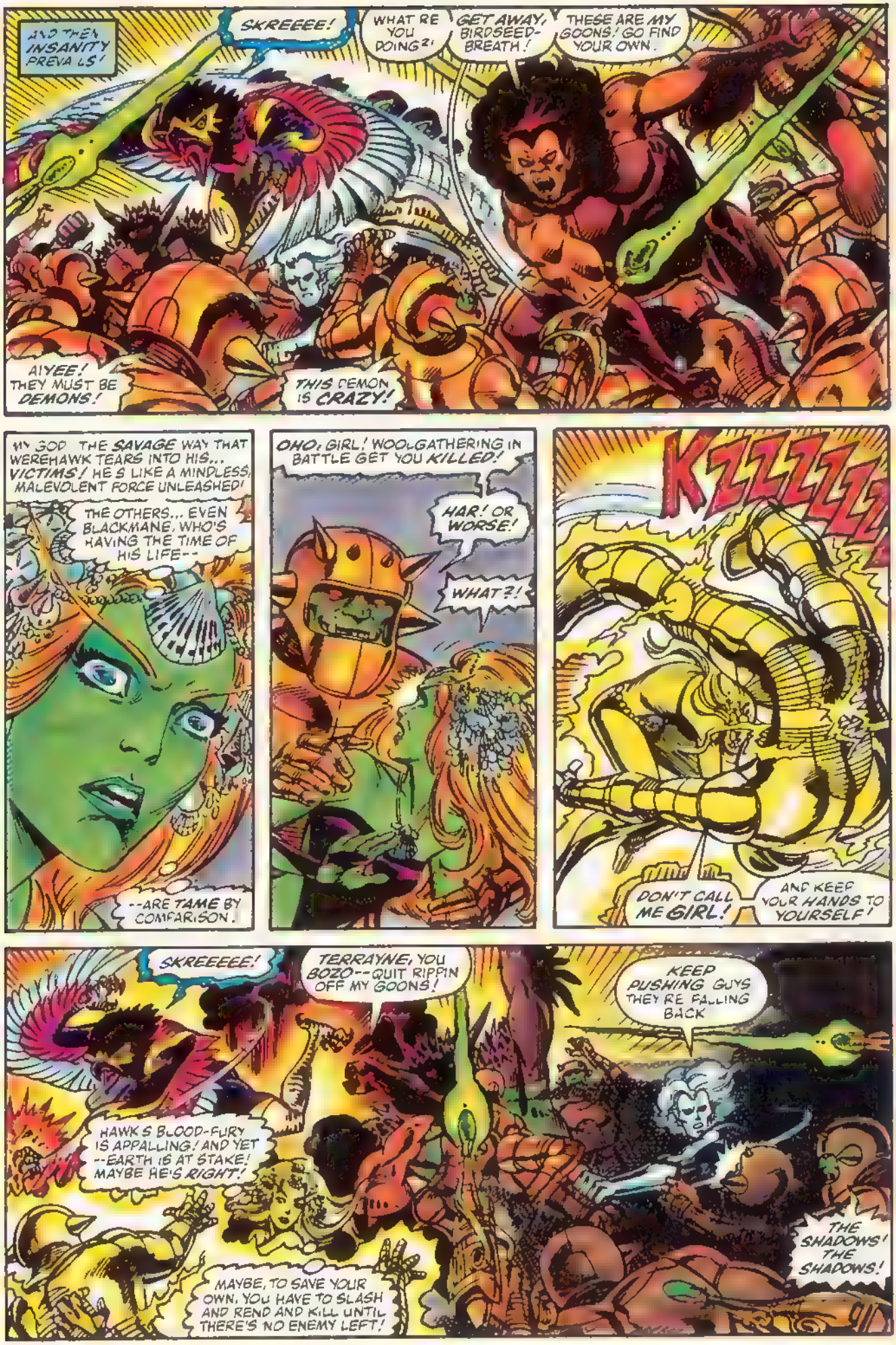

I THOUGHT SO.
AVATAR'S ROCK SMASHED RIGHT THROUGH' WHEN THE WEAPONS ARE FIRING, THERE'S NO FORCE FIELD PROTECTING THEM.
THAT MAKES IT EASIER THAN I THOUGHT TO GET INSIDE.
'GET INSIDE'? FROM HERE?

SURE, HARRY--A PATCH OF SHADE'S LIKE AN OPEN DOOR TO ME.
I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO LET YOU INSIDE. HAVE EVERYBODY STAND READY.
GO FOR IT M'MAN.

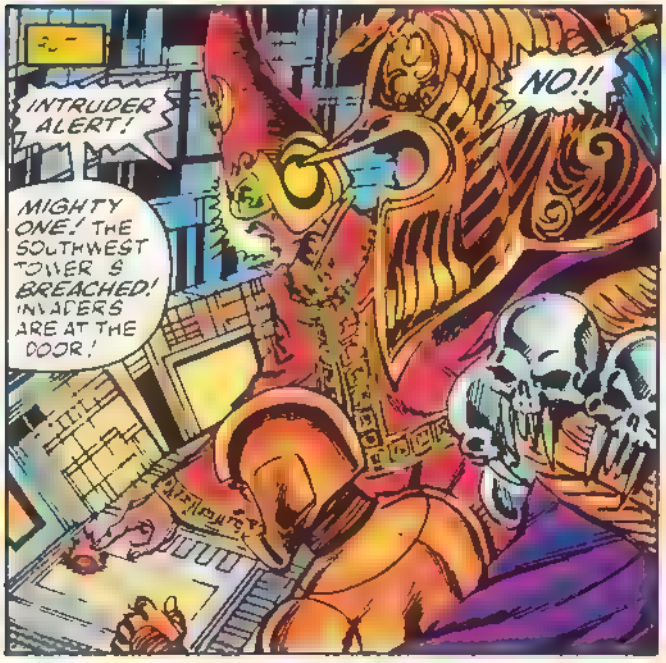
WE'LL BE READY, ALL RIGHT!
BRRR! THAT SHADOW ROUTINE IS THE CREEPIEST TH NG I EVER SAW

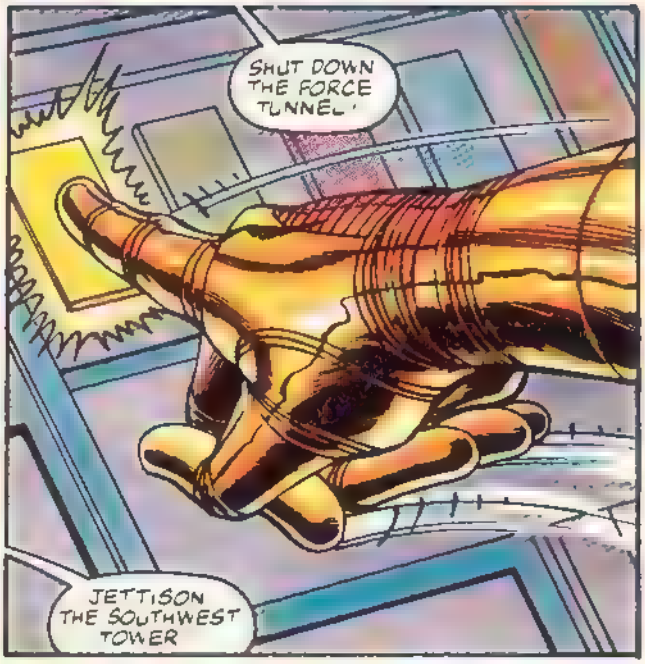

EASY AS PIE
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS WILL BE A RERUN OF MY LAST ADVENTURE.
AND IT IS.
UH... CAPTAIN IS IT GETTING DARK IN HERE?
MEANWHILE.
WELCOME, AVATAR BEHOLD YON DOME WITHSTANDS MY STARBOLTS
REINFORCEMENTS HAVE ARRIVED, MY LADY
I FEAR MY ENERGY LEVEL IS SEVERLY DEPLETED
FIRST I'LL RETURN ONE OF THESE MISSILES I'VE CAPTURED --
SHRAMM!
--AND THEN THE SECOND, WHILE YOU LADIES HIT THE DOME WITH EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT!

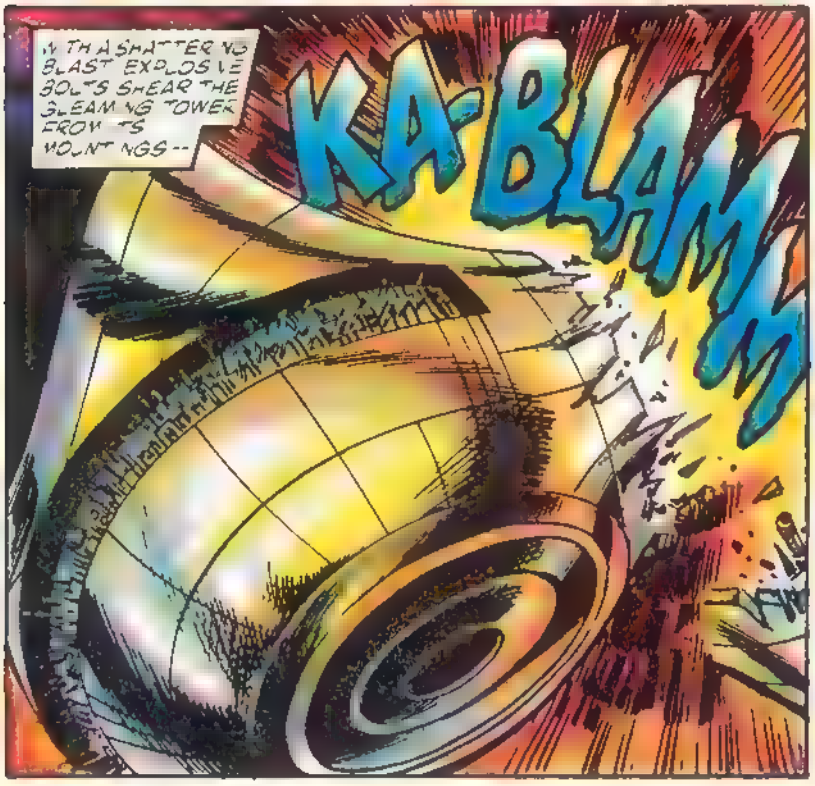

KPOW!
HEY, LOOK! THE BEAM FROM THAT TOWER HAS STOPPED!
WHAT THE--?
IT MUST BE SILVER SHADOW! HE'S BLOWN AN EMERGENCY HATCH!
THAT'S CAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A WIMP!
$#%@&*?!!
THAT'S AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF POWER FOR JUST ONE MAGE OR SHADOW! HOW DO YOU DO IT?
YES, JONATHON DEAR, BUT YOU WERE SO VIOLENT!
AH! NOW WHEN THEY'RE AFRAID OF THE DARK, THEY SHOOT AT ANYTHING.
AND FEED EACH OTHER.
THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO LEAD TO--
HEY, LOOK! IT'S GOONS!
AND THEY'RE ALL MINE!


AND THEN INSANITY PREVAILS!
SKREEEE!
WHAT RE YOU DOING?!
GET AWAY, BIRDSEED-BREATH!
THESE ARE MY GOONS! GO FIND YOUR OWN.
AIYEE! THEY MUST BE DEMONS!
THIS DEMON IS CRAZY!
MY GOD THE SAVAGE WAY THAT WEREHAWK TEARS INTO HIS... VICTIMS! HE'S LIKE A MINDLESS, MALEVOLENT FORCE UNLEASHED!
THE OTHERS... EVEN BLACKMANE, WHO'S HAVING THE TIME OF HIS LIFE--
--ARE TAME BY COMPARISON.
OHO, GIRL! WOOLGATHERING IN BATTLE GET YOU KILLED!
HAR! OR WORSE!
WHAT?!
KZZZZZZ
DON'T CALL ME GIRL!
AND KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF!
SKREEEEE!
TERRAYNE, YOU BOZO--QUIT RIPPIN OFF MY GOONS!
KEEP PUSHING GUYS THEY'RE FALLING BACK
HAWK'S BLOOD-FURY IS APPALLING! AND YET --EARTH IS AT STAKE! MAYBE HE'S RIGHT!
MAYBE, TO SAVE YOUR OWN, YOU HAVE TO SLASH AND REND AND KILL UNTIL THERE'S NO ENEMY LEFT!
THE SHADOWS! THE SHADOWS!

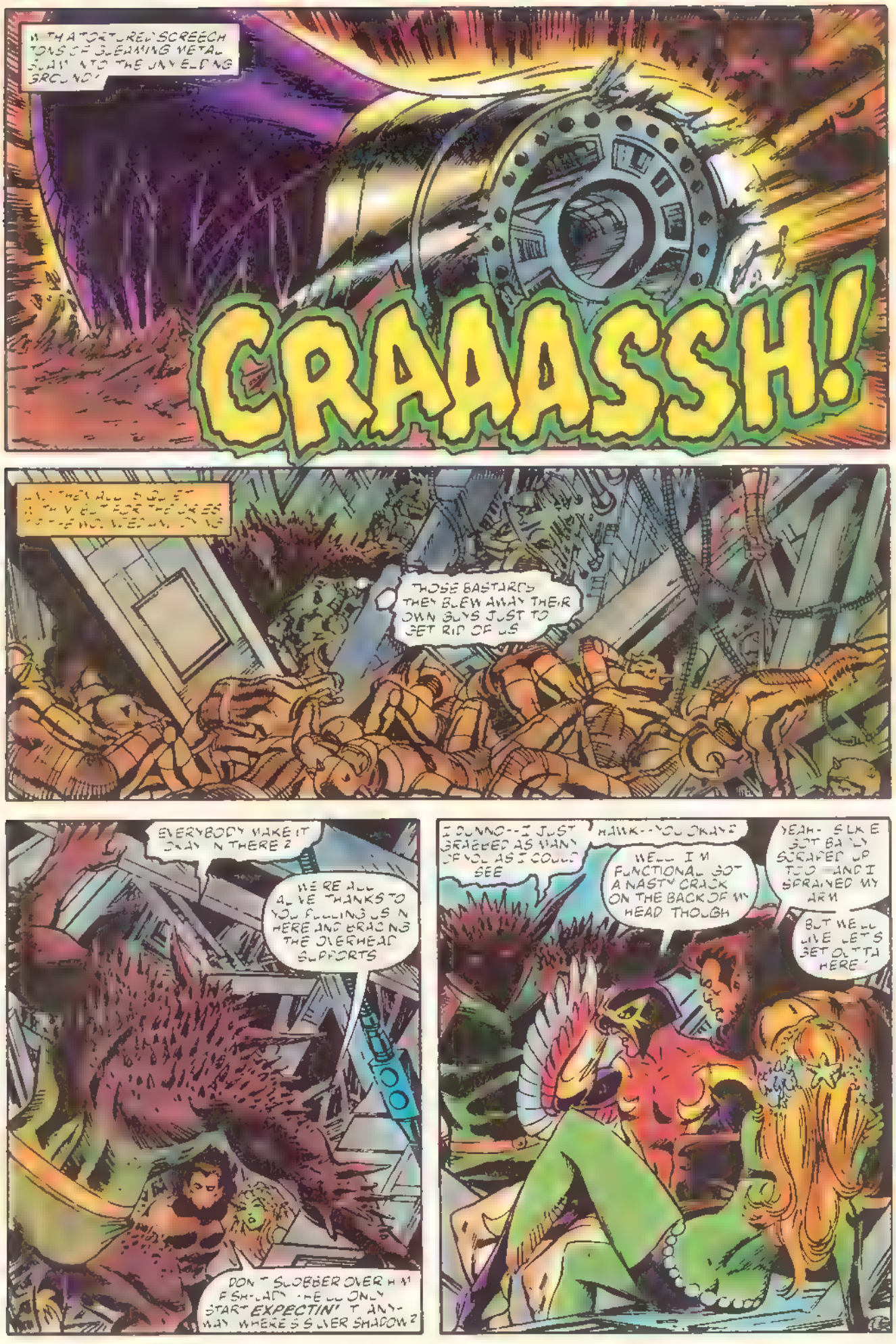
YAAA-A-A--
HEY HARRY
TOO BAD THIS IS SUCH A CRITICAL SITUATION CAUSE I'M HAVIN' A BALL!
I ALWAYS SAID, WALLY--YOU RE EVERY BIT AS CRAZY AS YOU ARE SHORT!
HEY YOU GUYS--
--BLACKMANE! WEREHAWK! COME ON! THIS IS AN ACCESS HATCH NTO THE MAIN FORTRESS!


INTRUDER ALERT!
MIGHTY ONE! THE SOUTHWEST TOWER S BREACHED! INVADERS ARE AT THE DOOR!
NO!!

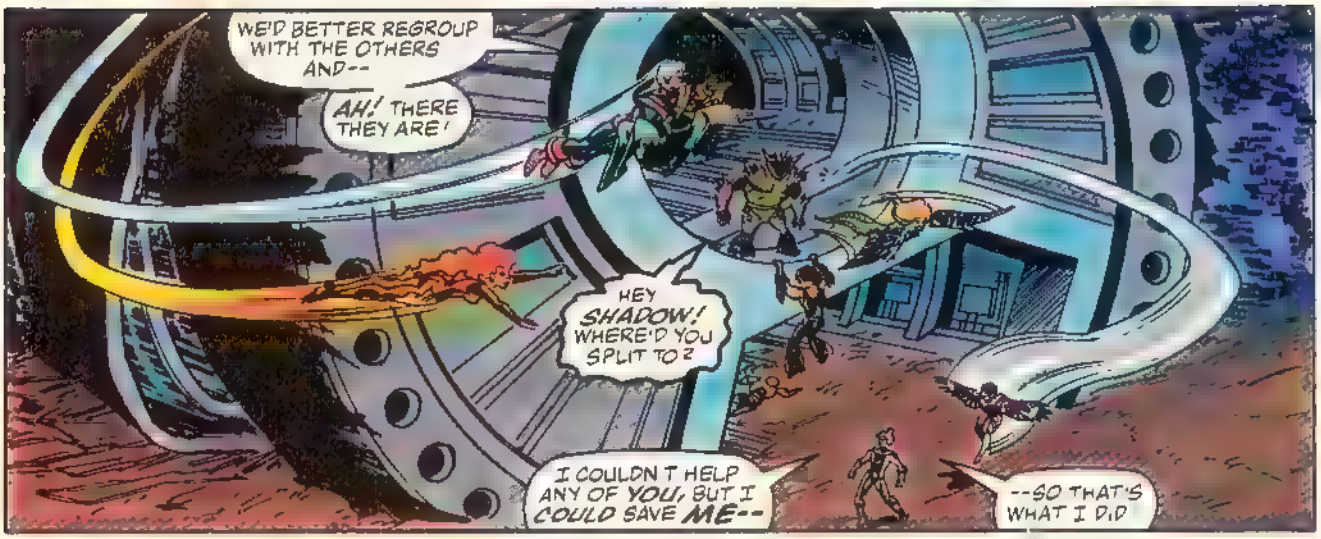

SHUT DOWN THE FORCE TUNNEL!
JETTISON THE SOUTHWEST TOWER

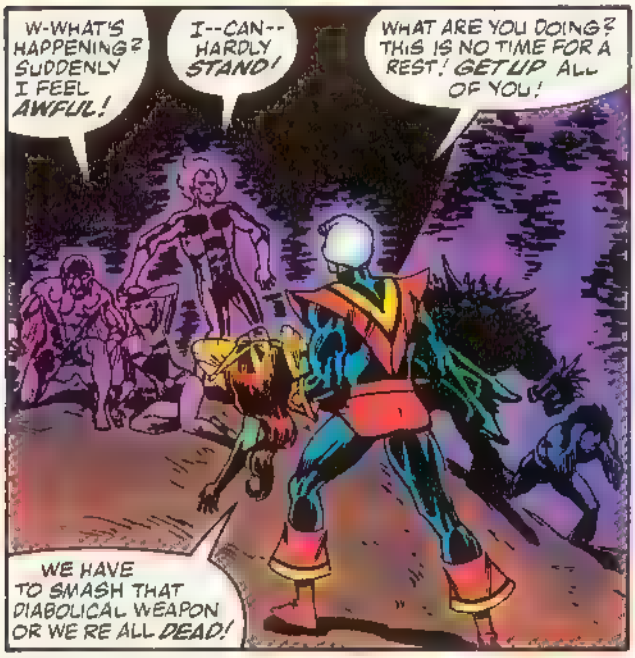

WITH A SHATTERING BLAST EXPLOSIVE BOLTS SHEAR THE GLEAMING TOWER FROM ITS MOUNTINGS--
KA-BLAM!!

--AND THE TOWER FALLS!
AII! THE DEMONS HAVE KILLED US!


WITH A TORTURED SCREECH TONS OF GLEAMING METAL SLAM INTO THE UNYIELDING GROUND!
CRAAASSH!
THOSE BASTARDS THEY BLEW AWAY THEIR OWN GUYS JUST TO GET RID OF US
EVERYBODY MAKE IT OKAY IN THERE?
WE'RE ALL ALIVE THANKS TO YOU FOLLING US IN HERE AND BRACING THE OVERHEAD SUPPORTS
DON'T SLOBBER OVER HIM FISH-LADY. HE'LL ONLY START EXPECTIN' IT ANY-WAY WHERE'S SILVER SHADOW?
I DUNNO--I JUST GRABBED AS MANY OF YOU AS I COULD SEE
HAWK--YOU OKAY?
WELL I'M FUNCTIONAL. GOT A NASTY CRACK ON THE BACK OF MY HEAD THOUGH
YEAH. SLIKE GOT BADLY SCRAPED UP TOO AND I SPRAINED MY ARM
BUT WE'LL LIVE. LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!

MEANWHILE...
LORD TEMUJIN-- SHIELD POWER IS DOWN TO FIVE PER CENT. IF SUNSWIFT AND THOSE OTHERS MAINTAIN THEIR ATTACK, THE DOME SHIELD ITSELF WILL FAIL WITHIN MINUTES.
NEVER!
I'LL NOT BE DEFEATED BY BARBARIANS! RIG OUT THE ANNIHILATOR!
BUT MIGHTY ONE-
--THE ANNIHILATOR DRAWS SO MUCH POWER WE'LL HAVE TO SHUT DOWN MOST OTHER SYSTEMS, INCLUDING DEFENSIVE WEAPONRY!
I DON'T WANT EXCUSES I WANT ACTION!
FIRE!
SUDDENLY THE CHILL EVENING SKY IS RIPPED BY SEARING TORRENTS OF RADIANT FIRE! THIS DEADLY ENERGY PERMEATES ALL LIVING THINGS IT TOUCHES-- CO-MINGLING WITH THEM AND DESTROYING THEM CELL BY CELL!
AH!
OH! WHAT--
THIS DEATH IS PARTICULARLY AGONIZING
AVATAR! WE MUST GET AWAY FROM HERE AT ONCE! IT IS DEATH TO REMAIN!
WHY? WHAT--
AVATAR! HELP MEEE--
MOSQUITO!
WHAT'S WRONG?
BY ALL THE VANSHED GODS SHE'S UNCONSCIOUS!
THIS ENERGY BELOVED-- IT IS AN ANNIHILATOR MATRIX! IT WILL DESTROY ALL LIFE WITHIN A THOUSAND MILE RADIUS!

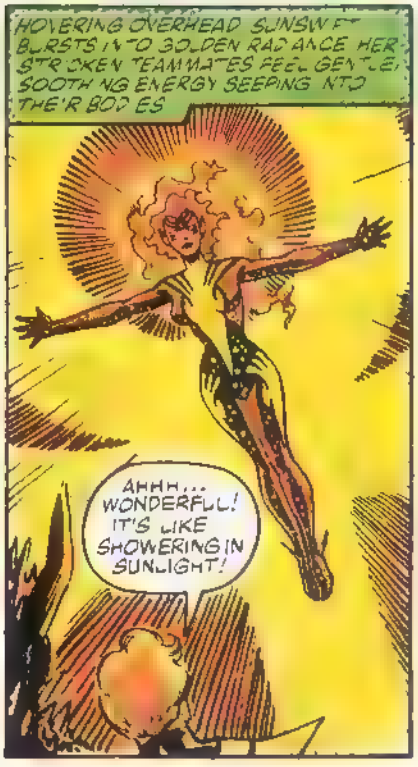

WE'D BETTER REGROUP WITH THE OTHERS AND--
AH! THERE THEY ARE!
HEY SHADOW! WHERE'D YOU SPLIT TO?
I COULDN'T HELP ANY OF YOU, BUT I COULD SAVE ME--
--SO THAT'S WHAT I DID


W-WHAT'S HAPPENING? SUDDENLY I FEEL AWFUL!
I--CAN-- HARDLY STAND!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THIS IS NO TIME FOR A REST! GET UP ALL OF YOU!
WE HAVE TO SMASH THAT DIABOLICAL WEAPON OR WE'RE ALL DEAD!

COME ON! GET UP! REMEMBER YOUR TRAINING. DAMN IT! YOU'RE ALL IN TOP PHYSICAL CONDITION! FIGHT THIS THING.
C-CAN'T FIGHT... CAN'T EVEN STAND...
GO AWAY... LET US DIE QUIETLY, CAN'T YOU..?

NEITH-- IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO? I CAN FEEL THE THING BEGINNING TO AFFECT ME TOO.
AYE, BELOVED I HAVE AN IDEA.

MANIPULATING ENERGY IS WHAT I DO, EVEN IN MY DEPLETED STATE I MAY BE ABLE TO MODIFY THE MATRIX, TO TEMPORARILY LESSEN ITS EFFECTS.
GOOD. GIVE IT A TRY!

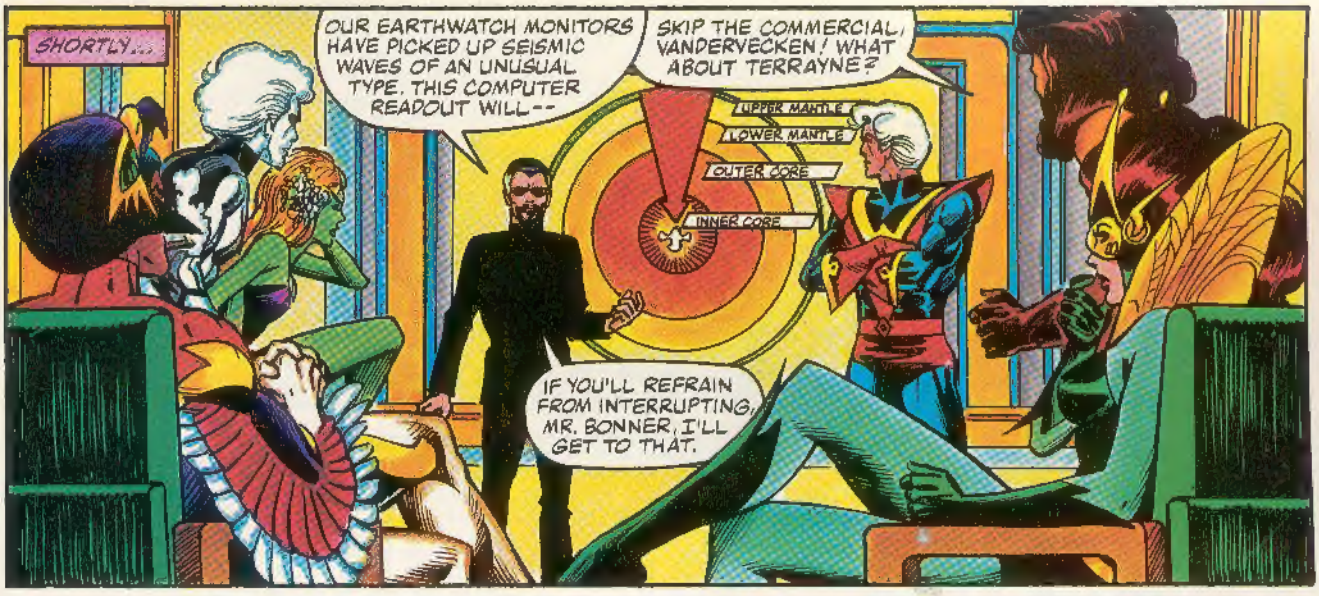

HOVERING OVERHEAD SUNSWIFT BURSTS INTO GOLDEN RADIANCE HER STRICKEN TEAMMATES FEEL GENTLE, SOOTHING ENERGY SEEPING INTO THEIR BODIES
AHHH... WONDERFUL! IT'S LIKE SHOWERING IN SUNLIGHT!

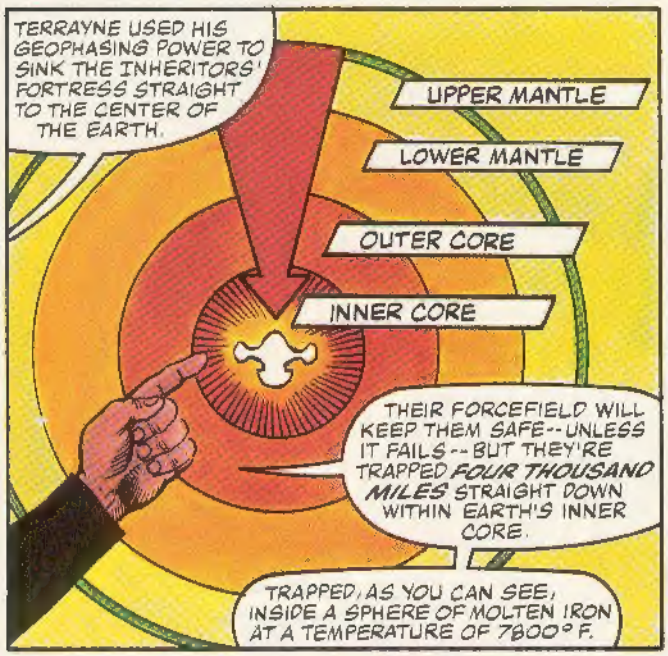
MAN; WHAT HAPPENED?
AHHH-- WOW. BACK FROM THE DEAD--I THINK...
ALL RIGHT GET UP YOU GUYS-- I'VE GOT AN IDEA HOW TO KNOCK OVER THIS CRUMMY FORTRESS.
I NEED A SMOKESCREEN BETWEEN HERE AND THE FORT SO THEY CAN'T SEE WHAT WE'RE DOING.
SHADOW CAN YOU--?
NOT OVER AN AREA OF THAT SIZE
I CAN DO IT FOR YOU HARRY.
YOU CAN?
SHORTLY...
SEE, SUNSWIFT'S ALREADY INADVERTANTLY BEGUN CREATING A MIST BY RAISING THE AIR TEMPERATURE.
BETWEEN THE TWO OF US WE CAN WHIP UP A REALLY THICK SEA MIST
OKAY AVATAR--NOW THAT THE FORT'S FOG-BOUND, YOU CAN GIVE ME A LIFT OVER THERE.
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, TERRAYNE. THIS CLOSE TO THE DOME SUNSWIFT CAN'T PROTECT YOU FROM THE ANNIHILATOR.
HEY NO SWEAT IN MY EARTHEN FORM I SEEM TO BE LESS VULNERABLE TO THAT ANNIHILATOR THING.
YOU BETTER HOPE SO!
I'VE GOT TO GO --IT'S REALLY CUTTING INTO ME OUT HERE
BEAT IT MAN, WHILE YOU STILL CAN.
OKAY, INNER TORS! IT'S JUST YOU AND ME NOW. YOU'RE GOIN DOWN, AND I'M THE ONE WHO'S GONNA DO IT.
ME--TERRAYNE, THE EARTHMOVER!

SUDDENLY THE EARTH AROUND THE BASE OF THE GREAT FORTRESS BEGINS TO SOFTEN AND MELT THE GIANT STRUCTURE LURCHES AND SHIFTS
YAWING AND LISTING THE INHERITORS' MIGHTY STRONGHOLD BEGINS TO SETTLE INTO THE GROUND!
GREAT THUNDER! LOOK WHAT HE'S DOING!
:GASP: I--IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!
AND HE DOES.
AND WITHIN THE DOME...
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
MY LORD--SAVE US!
DAGON--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE'RE SINKING!
GETTIN TOUGH TO HANG ON. DOME'S.. SLIPPERY.
AND--ANNIHILATOR IS AFFECTING ME MORE THAN I THOUGHT
GOT TO..DO'T GOT TO HANG ON TEAM'S...COUNTIN' ON ME.. TO. TO SCORE!
BLAAAMM!
BY THE GREAT MOTHER SUN!

INCREDIBLE! HE SANK THE WHOLE MESS INTO THE GROUND!
YES, BUT-- HE WENT DOWN WITH IT!
WELL, YEAH--HIS POWER HAS A CERTAIN RANGE IF HE TOOK THEM DOWN VERY FAR HE HAD TO TRAVEL ALONG
BUT-- HOW FAR? AND--NOW THE WHOLE AREA IS NOTHING BUT A VAST FIREPIT!
WHY DOESN'T HE COME BACK? WHY DOESN'T HE COME BACK?
MAYBE-- MAYBE HE CAN'T
I DON'T WANNA HEAR THAT!
I MUST LEAVE BAK-EN-ABA MY LIFE ESSENCES ARE WANING!
I MUST RETURN TO THE DAYSTAR WHILE STRENGTH REMAINS WITHIN ME.
TWAS SWEET--YET BITTER-- TO SEE ONCE MORE THY BELOVED VISAGE.
UNTIL ANOTHER MEETING-- FAREWELL.
FARE-- WELL
I WILL PRAY TO ALL THE VANISHED GODS TO BRING A DAY WHEN YOU AND I MIGHT TOUCH HANDS ONCE MORE...
WITH A RUSH OF COSMIC FIRE SHE HURTLES ALOFT ORPHANED CHILD OF EARTH, ADOPTED DAUGHTER OF THE SUN, LOVELY LONELY EXILE.
STREAKING SILVER ON WINGS OF GOLDEN FLAME, SHE VARIES THE VOID FOR A MOMENT THEN SHE'S GONE

THIS IS REALLY STARTIN' TA WORRY ME. TERRAYNE'S BEEN GONE WAY TOO LONG.
WHERE COULD HE BE?!
GET YOUR BUTT BACK HERE, HARRY!
AVATAR, TERRAYNE'S BEEN GONE FOR OVER AN HOUR NOW. I DON'T THINK HE'S COMING BACK.
MAYBE HE CAN'T-- MAYBE HE'S STUCK SOMEHOW.
MAYBE-- MAYBE HE'S DEAD.
HE CAN'T BE DEAD! BEING DEAD IS STUPID!
HERE'S SOMETHING ELSE FOR EVERYBODY TO CONSIDER -- HOW DO WE GET HOME FROM HERE? I DON'T THINK I CAN FLY THAT FAR --AND THERE'RE NO PHONES.
WHAT DO WE DO?
VERY SIMPLE, WEREHAWK-- WE OPEN A DOOR IN THE AIR AND COLLECT YOU!
VANDERVECKEN!
THE VERY SAME.
COME ON, HURRY UP! WE CAN'T KEEP THIS DOOR OPEN LONG-- YOU COULD RUN MOST COUNTRIES FOR A YEAR ON THE ENERGY-EXPENDITURES FOR THIS STUNT!
WHAT ABOUT TERRAYNE? HE SAVED EVERYBODY! YOU CAN'T JUST ABANDON HIM!
WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF ABANDONING HIM, MR. BONNER--
--BUT WHERE TERRAYNE HAS GONE, WE HAVE NO WAY, AS YET, OF FOLLOWING.
BUT WE'LL POST A WATCH HERE, SHOULD HE REAPPEAR.
SEE THAT YOU DO, VANDERVECKEN.
DO I DETECT AN UNSPOKEN 'OR ELSE'?
YES, YOU DO.

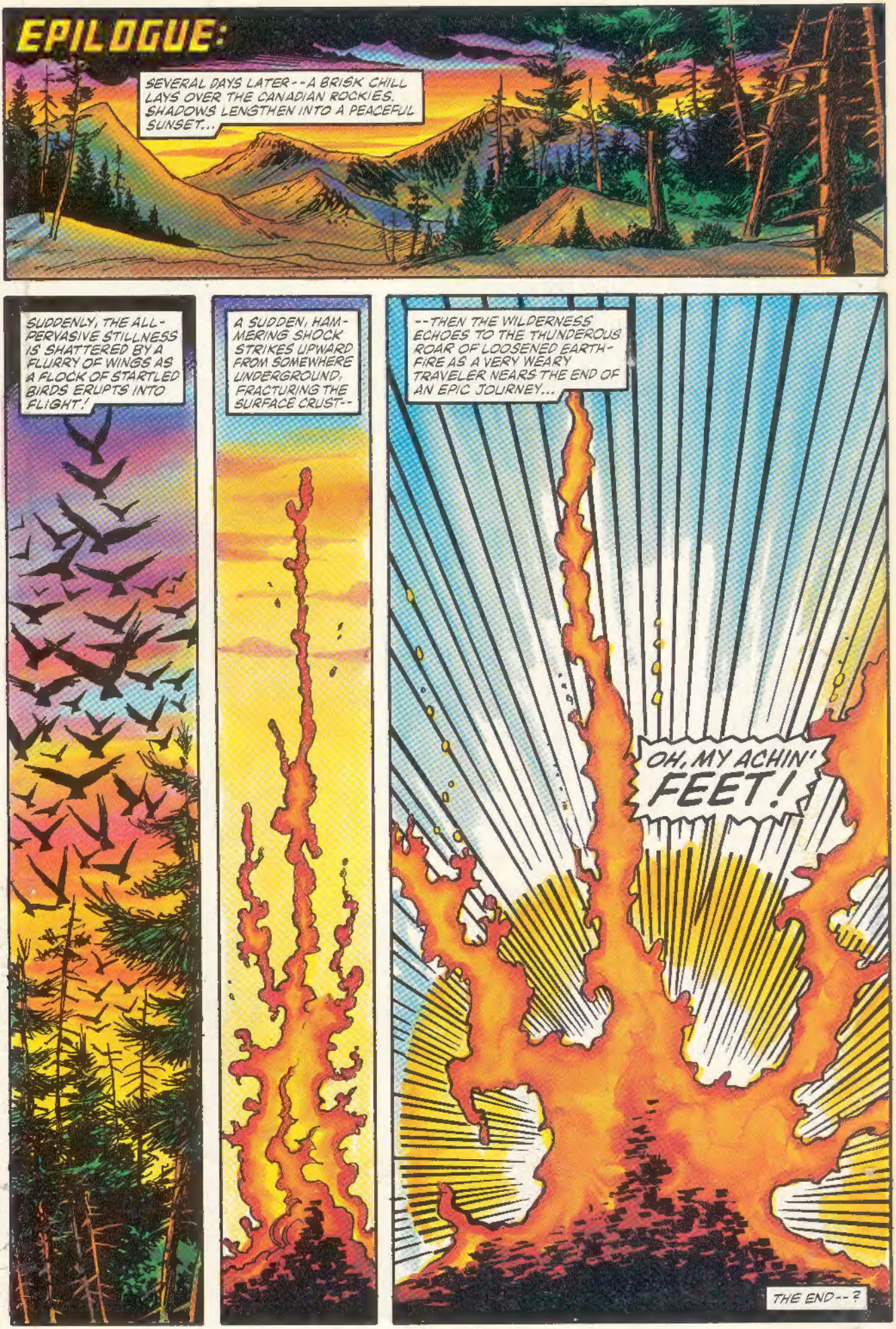

SHORTLY...
OUR EARTHWATCH MONITORS HAVE PICKED UP SEISMIC WAVES OF AN UNUSUAL TYPE. THIS COMPUTER READOUT WILL--
SKIP THE COMMERCIAL, VANDERVECKEN! WHAT ABOUT TERRAYNE?
UPPER MANTLE
LOWER MANTLE
OUTER CORE
INNER CORE
IF YOU'LL REFRAIN FROM INTERRUPTING, MR. BONNER, I'LL GET TO THAT.


TERRAYNE USED HIS GEOPHASING POWER TO SINK THE INHERITORS' FORTRESS STRAIGHT TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH.
UPPER MANTLE
LOWER MANTLE
OUTER CORE
INNER CORE
THEIR FORCEFIELD WILL KEEP THEM SAFE--UNLESS IT FAILS--BUT THEY'RE TRAPPED *FOUR THOUSAND MILES* STRAIGHT DOWN WITHIN EARTH'S INNER CORE.
TRAPPED, AS YOU CAN SEE, INSIDE A SPHERE OF MOLTEN IRON AT A TEMPERATURE OF 7800° F.

AS FOR TERRAYNE--WE *KNOW* HE SURVIVED LONG ENOUGH TO SEND THE INHERITORS INTO THEIR MOLTEN PRISON...
ASSUMING HE IS *STILL* ALIVE, I MUST POINT OUT THAT IT'S A FOUR-THOUSAND-MILE WALK--
--AND IT'S ALL *UPHILL*.

'ALL UPHILL'?! TERRAYNE MAY BE DEAD OR INJURED AND YOU MAKE *STUPID CRACKS*--
TAKE IT EASY, BLACKMANE--IT'S PLAIN VANDERVECKEN'S PEOPLE ARE DOING EVERYTHING THEY CAN.

MEANWHILE, WE'LL STAND READY TO AID TERRAYNE IF POSSIBLE--
--AND WATCH TO MAKE SURE THE *INHERITORS* ARE REALLY FINISHED.
AND THEN--WHO KNOWS?


EPILOGUE:
SEVERAL DAYS LATER--A BRISK CHILL LAYS OVER THE CANADIAN ROCKIES. SHADOWS LENGTHEN INTO A PEACEFUL SUNSET...
SUDDENLY, THE ALL-PERVASIVE STILLNESS IS SHATTERED BY A FLURRY OF WINGS AS A FLOCK OF STARTLED BIRDS ERUPTS INTO FLIGHT!
A SUDDEN, HAMMERING SHOCK STRIKES UPWARD FROM SOMEWHERE UNDERGROUND, FRACTURING THE SURFACE CRUST--
--THEN THE WILDERNESS ECHOES TO THE THUNDEROUS ROAR OF LOOSENED EARTH-FIRE AS A VERY WEARY TRAVELER NEARS THE END OF AN EPIC JOURNEY...
OH, MY ACHIN' FEET!
THE END--?

TOMORROW IS *NOW!*

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